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PAINTING A SURREALIST CASE STUDY TABLEAU:
CULTURALLY RELEVANT POST-DISASTER EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Educational Theory, Policy and Practice

by
Jolanta Smolen Santana
B.S. Henderson State University 2005
M. A. Louisiana State University 2007
May 2012

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Abstract

This retrospective study explores how each disaster site needs to be considered as its own individual portrait for analysis and how inclusion of cultural elements contributes to the recovery of those affected by the disaster and helps in reinstating their cultural identity. This study was conducted after hurricane Katrina's landfall, at the largest FEMA trailer park, Renaissance Village, from its inception in October 2005 until its closure June 2008. It portrays how programs may ensure their sustainability if cultural elements are included in the program design, development, and delivery of services. The nuanced notions of culture are predominantly recognized in many realms such as curriculum theory, educational leadership, and especially in the social justice literature. Current post-disaster educational responses portray a predominant lack of, and dismissal of cultural values in educational responses to disasters. This is mainly due to time and funding constraints. This study presents a blue print for future post-disaster education programming, which promotes using local culture as the main driving force. This study contributes to the Emergency education field as well as culturally relevant pedagogy literature.

Chapter 1: The Story Behind It All

Nothing is “culture free,” but neither are individuals simply mirrors of their culture. It is the interaction between them that both gives a communal cast to individual thought and imposes a certain unpredictable richness on any culture’s way life, thought, or feeling.

-Jerome Bruner, 1996

Cultural relevance was instilled and consequently engraved in me throughout my life. However, I never imagined that it would suddenly become the main foci of analysis for all my actions during chaotic, tumultuous times. My journey began with my arrival to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in August of 2005. Shortly thereafter, on August 29th, I became an unintentional witness and participant in one of the greatest American tragedies, the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Growing up as a child of diplomats, moving from one Middle Eastern location to the next, helped me develop adaptive skills. From those life experiences, I felt more prepared than most in handling power outages, addressing lack of food, and dealing with uncertainty during turbulent times and knowing how to process information from my immediate environment. Staying conscientious of cultural differences became one of my main tools in meaning making and building connections with indigenous people. I did not understand or agree with some practices in some instances; for example, disallowing women from driving in Saudi Arabia, or fixed marriages in Yemen. However, all such encounters made me realize the multitude of cultural and traditional aspects that were at odds with my own experience. My engagement in dialogue about such instances ultimately enriched my knowledge and increased my respect and appreciation for such differences. With that in mind, I came to Baton Rouge expecting to quickly acclimate myself with local culture and engage in day-to-day activities. However, the events that transpired next made me realize how much I had yet to learn.

Arriving in the middle of August 2005, I had no way to predict that in two weeks’ time I would become involved in an historic event. I found an apartment, finally signed a lease and

moved in my most precious belongings: a bed, a bike, my laptop, and passport. I was finally ready to start exploring Louisiana. The professor I worked under, and his wife, were most hospitable and took me to all the main spots in Baton Rouge. The mixture of French, Spanish, and Native American culture was woven throughout the entire city much like remnant Mardi Gras beads on the majestic oak trees. Then, we received word of Hurricane Katrina approaching. The professor and his wife kindly invited me to stay with them during the storm, as I had never experienced one. I was greatly appreciative of the gesture and accepted. That afternoon, we anxiously watched the path of the storm. On August 29th, the storm began its angry, howling approach. In its path were the coastal parishes and the city of New Orleans.

As night fell, the winds began to brush the leaves off their branches while they mustered all their might clinging to stay on. Soon the winds increased in force, and the branches and trunks of the trees began to lean and bend. Though the trees rebelled, Mother Nature had her own intentions for them in mind. Several branches began to knock on the walls of the house where we stayed. Outside, you could hear branches breaking off like matchsticks, flying through the air, and eventually hitting whatever came their way. The professor's house found itself in the path of a few rogue limbs. Thankfully none penetrated through; across the street, other houses weren't as lucky. A few hours later, the electricity went out. Now in the stale, 100 percent humid darkness, with our jugs of water, flashlights, and coolers, we patiently awaited the end of the storm. None of us slept. Having survived several catastrophes in my lifetime, I refused to believe that this was going to be my final moment. The humidity was intolerable, even thinking caused one to sweat profusely. Opening a window was out of the question. It was then that I knew I had gotten myself into an interesting situation and all of my abilities were about to be tested. As my father would say, "this is the most important year in your life." Only this time I had no idea to what

extent his saying was true. Despite the inevitable fact that he said it every year during my brothers' and my lifetime, he was right: I was in a liminal place – a new place – starting my doctoral program, and I did not know a soul apart from the professor and his wife. How I would make sense of the storms and the situation might indeed define the next several years. The night continued on, and still I did not sleep. The knocking of branches continued. I wondered if they were knocking for help, to save them from their inevitable doom. It wasn't a scene from a horror movie or a thriller; it was a sad ending full of loneliness. Ephemeral darkness. And as many have mentioned thereafter – surreal.

The next day, August 30th, 2005, we realized the extent of wind damage and devastation in Baton Rouge. Together with the professor and his wife, we decided to restock supplies and perhaps secure a generator. What we found were scenes reminiscent from my 1980s native Poland: long queues for groceries, stores with shelves emptied of stock, and the frustration of people that so familiar to me. The professor's wife, a Ukrainian, and I understood the dynamic. We quickly adjusted our behavior, taking turns standing in queues while the others proceeded in acquiring remaining supplies, chatting with those around us and taking comfort in situated experience. Once settled, we realized that our ordeal was in fact meager compared to those affected in New Orleans and the surrounding parishes.

One of millions who watched TV in a state of awe and shock, one of thousands able to follow the tragedy through a roaring diesel-fueled generator powering our television, I became a spectator to an event that I could never imagine taking place in the United States. With my hosts, we watched broadcasts in disbelief regarding the inefficiency and delay and in some instances absent response. Due to poorly engineered levees, inefficient and sometimes nonexistent evacuation plans, and for many other reasons, the city of New Orleans suffered from the impact

of one of the most devastating natural disasters in United States' history (Horne, 2006). People scattered and dispersed to a variety of cities and states. In order to get away from New Orleans and subsequent flooding due to levee breaks, people got on buses with no predetermined destination (Horne, 2006). Families were divided for months. Almost overnight Baton Rouge doubled in size. "Within days, Baton Rouge, a city of 225,000, was an overwhelmed mass of about 500,000. Many evacuees were just passing through, but city officials say that today, Baton Rouge's population remains 275,000-325,000" (Johnson, February 21, 2007, ¶ 3). Shelters began to fill up with evacuees, and those who could afford it managed to occupy all available apartments and houses.

Louisiana State University (LSU) ceased its typical activity and urged students, faculty and staff to participate in volunteer work in any capacity possible. In the course of just a few days, this public institution began to function as a hub for major relief agencies and their efforts.

Volunteers were needed to assist with meeting needs of evacuated citizens; supporting the efforts of local, state, and federal relief agencies; providing necessary resources and facilities to carry out response efforts; and addressing the needs of our own campus community. The people of LSU's departments and programs filled these needs with creative thinking, (Bacher & Devlin, 2005, p. 39).

Though classes were cancelled for the entire first week of September 2005, most of LSU's student body continuously came to campus to volunteer and help, whether it was to gather supplies for shelter, to babysit, or to lend a sympathetic ear. The suspension of rules and red tape during the time of crisis and uncertainty enhanced the response to the flood of incoming population and new students. For instance, though I found an apartment two days prior to the hurricanes, my apartment served as a storage place for my neighbors who managed to gather some of their belongings and drive to Baton Rouge. I then began working with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in conjunction with LSU College of Education (COE) on the

assessment of shelters in the Baton Rouge area. Considering the sudden, immense inflow of over 100,000 evacuees (Haygood, August 25, 2006), not all shelters could provide all of the necessary supplies and services. The assessment served to inform, both IRC and shelters, of the most pressing needs and the living conditions. Through this assessment study, agencies were deployed to support the staff and those affected were able to attain the additional help. However, my participation in this project and additional volunteering seemed minute compared to the actual exigency.

The sweltering late summer sun and humidity contributed greatly to the overall sense of malaise, desperation, and tragedy. As the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began to provide \$2,000 debit cards, evacuees formed lines that extended over several blocks near the River Center in downtown Baton Rouge, a designated official shelter. No services provided either water or food for those waiting in lines. Mothers who were not fortunate enough to have brought diapers with them dealt with babies who defecated on themselves. Ambulances watched over the elderly, while media prompted those in lines to share their exasperation by giving them pre-made signs with notes and critiques of FEMA and the government. In every interview that was featured, numerous evacuees characterized their ordeal as surreal and unimaginable that something like this could ever happen to them, in Louisiana, in the United States of America. This, however, was only the beginning.

By October, shelters began to evict those displaced, forcing them to find other places to stay. They relocated either by their own means or through FEMA. For those that used the latter, FEMA trailer parks were quickly and unceremoniously established in city neighborhoods with little consideration for existing residents. Fear, uncertainty, and suspicion resulted in local neighbors who vocally expressed sentiments that they did not want them there. As a result, the

displaced population developed highly defensive attitudes and approaches to their new proximities.

Typically, the trailer parks resembled highly isolated camps. The largest one, established on the outskirts of Baker, Louisiana, was called Renaissance Village (RV). With over 560 travel trailers, Renaissance Village housed a significant number of evacuees, “over 1,600 displaced New Orleanians...now call the place home,” (Hustmyre, 2006, p. 36; Singer, 2006). It officially opened its doors on October 6, 2006 (Singer, 2006). The once-urban population now found itself in a fenced area surrounded by cow pastures. One of its nearest neighbors was Jetson, a juvenile detention center, similarly fenced and guarded by security. Similarities between the two compounds were obvious and jarring. For the longest time, there were no permanent roads that led or snaked through the trailer park. The gravel roads resembled an organized delta that led to rows upon rows of trailers. Often times it was impossible to distinguish one row from the next until one read the alphabetical indicators: Row R, Row S, Row T, etc. Trailer numbers: R-24, R-25. FEMA insisted on the temporary nature of any facility that was placed in the park.

FEMA hired a private security company, Corporate Security Solutions (www.democracynow.com), which prevented participation by many organizations with a community building focus from engaging in information dissemination or long-term services for those housed at Renaissance Village. For example, in the first months of its existence, no faith-based or church organizations were allowed on the Renaissance Village grounds on the basis of separation of church and state (Singer, 2006). The trailer park was recognized as a part of federal grounds. Despite the protest of the residents and service providers who saw these organizations as cultural spaces for the evacuees to begin their recovery after trauma, they were not permitted. It was not until the summer of 2006, over six months after the opening of the park, that church

services were finally conducted on the grounds, in the community tent, the official public space (Singer, 2006). Consequently, such practices and attitudes reinforced the temporary nature of a constantly shifting atmosphere of population and uncertain numbers. With this background and the current unsettling and unpredictable conditions, the children at the Renaissance Village were also greatly affected. In April 2006, of the 600 children on site, only 154 were recorded as attending school (Fleener, Willis, Brun, & Herert in Roberson & Brown, 2007). In September of 2006, 120 attended school from a population of 450 students (Singer, 2006).

This is but one of many examples where opportunities to infuse specific and unique cultural elements were dismissed from relevance to the general recovery of the evacuees. Yet, this became my catalyst to think about other cultural aspects that were being ignored and which could have been used to ease the traumatic experience and create a degree of normalcy and routine. What further provided the essence of complexity was the lack of agreement about what culture entails (Geertz, 2000). An overarching question broadly frames this study: Why should post-disaster programming include an educational component? Through this exploration, the following three specific questions will be addressed:

1. Why is cultural relevance important in the development of educational programming in post-disaster contexts?
2. How can cultural relevance strengthen programmatics?
3. How did cultural relevance contribute to the longevity of the LSU run Delta Express Program?

The purpose of this study is to examine elements of culturally relevant post-disaster education programming in one specific instance, yet also explore the possibilities of establishing a blueprint for culturally relevant post-disaster programming in other contexts.

Framing Post-Disaster Contextual Canvas

Natural disasters such as hurricanes fragment communities and social contexts. Post-disaster efforts assume many shapes and timeframes. The majorities of response programs are intended to be short-lived and fail to aid the affected population in a capacity commensurate with their needs. In many cases, the relief efforts that last the longest are health-related aid programs used to prevent epidemics, along with security and military assistance, which seeks to ensure that no malice is done to the vulnerable population and establish a sense of order (Kagawa, 2005). Post-disaster education responses have only gained momentum in the past 20 years of exploration and research (Crossley, 2002; Kagawa, 2005; Little, 2000). In the early 1990s, education was first mentioned and referred to as an inalienable right for all children. Since that time, education has been increasingly recognized as the fourth pillar of humanitarian aid right after food and water, shelter and health care (Machel, 2001). However, the attempt to rebuild a nation or community through education is not a new concept. It is a method of restoring or establishing a sense of normalcy in the lives of those who have no control of their surroundings. Then again, the definition of normalcy varies depending on the community, group, or agency involved.

In the U.S., the educational responses to crises take place in schools or through non-profit programs with pre-existing programmatic models and activities. The educational responses include additional academic help such as homework help, Individualized Educational Plans (IEP), and other forms of aid designed to catch a student up to their appropriate academic level (Robinson & Brown, 2007). However, the development and design of contextually and culturally relevant educational responsive programs remains largely unexplored.

Recontextualization of Education Programs into Culturally Relevant Entities

The concept of recontextualization of education programs is suggested as an integral part of program development. Crossley (2002) and Rodwell (1998) both emphasize the strengthening of distinctive cultural identities and the need to develop indigenous education models. Yet, such elements have a long way from becoming a common practice in the post-disaster context.

Cultural relevant approaches that include pedagogy have been put into practice in several social sciences fields adjacent to education, such as psychology, counseling, and health. A brief synopsis of select field's approaches follows.

Cultural Relevance in Psychology

Cultural relevance in the field of psychology, as opposed to cultural psychology, refers to the development of programs and practices as part of therapy for clients. Programs addressing psychological needs tend to be more intuitive about cultural practices and beliefs since culture can help in addressing a problem or condition. For example, Barrio (2000) purports that the interethnic differences between minority and Euro-American families and individuals present a new set of information and resources that help in the rehabilitative process, particularly when dealing with mental illness. Such differentiation between cultural backgrounds can serve as a springboard for an appropriate course of action for each client (Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004).

Cultural Relevance in Counseling

Similarly in counseling, understanding the context and practices of a particular individual or group can help in determining a treatment or finding a contextual resolution (Derald, Arrendodo & McDavis, 1992). Understanding the mental states of those under study (clients) largely depends on understanding how an individual constructs meaning and where meaning is made. Consequently, support groups and community resources can be used to address the need.

Cultural Relevance in Health

The medical field is literally built upon culturally relevant practices and knowledge. Medical advancements would not have taken place if environmental, social, and cultural factors were not taken into consideration. For example, the types of food and ways of preparing it in different geographic areas might conflict with the ways a body processes certain types of vegetation. Similarly, the rich glossary of homeopathic medicines inspired many treatments still in use today (starve a fever, feed a cold).

Cultural Relevance in Education

The phenomenon of applying cultural elements in education is very recent. In the United States, the concept of including cultural elements in curriculum or pedagogy, have only gained momentum as its population has become increasingly more diverse (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Yet, there are no approaches that designate culture as the main driving force in designing education programs in post-disaster contexts (Curry, 2005). There is a necessity to craft programs that would sensitively address the needs of vulnerable, displaced populations especially among children, reaffirm their cultural identity, and adhere to and extend community's knowledge on education in a respectful manner. In many post-disaster situations, education programs have a tendency to reflect cookie-cutter models replicated from one site to another (Kagawa, 2000). Such practices do not necessarily help the community in the recovery process, but instead perpetuate the state of liminality and outsiders' impositions from unresponsive practices.

Exploration of culturally relevant practices in education and other social fields potentially increases the amount of participation in such programs. Consequently, taking into consideration unique or specific indigenous, cultural, and familial norms and incorporating them into systems such as education, could potentially change the attitudes based on perceptions of education and

its disenfranchising nature toward particular groups. Cultural relevance is not a panacea for existing problems occurring in disaster response; however, such practices have not been fully explored. Examining post-disaster education responses and practices could prove beneficial in building a potential blueprint that includes factors influencing perceptions of education in dire situations. However, one has to remember to consider each context, disaster, and response as a particular case study or tableau with a unique set of elements that will not be replicable in other cases. Therefore, all future blueprints would involve only larger themes and practices. To better understand the elements involved in the building of the Louisiana State University College of Education Delta Express Program (DEP) that was implemented at Renaissance Village, one must first become familiar with the Louisiana post-disaster contextual canvas.

Post-Disaster Examination of Louisiana

By many measures, Louisiana is considered as one of the poorest areas in the United States, ranking second lowest in median income for families with children led by a single mother pre-Katrina (\$14,101). Similarly, students in state public schools rank as one of the lowest in terms of performance on educational standardized tests (Children's Defense Fund 2007; Roberson & Brown, 2007). Before Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans Public Parish School system was perceived as one of the lowest performing public school systems (Roberson & Brown, 2007), possessing only a 20% high school graduation rate. Further, generational poverty, a history of poor attendance, graft, dirty politics, mismanagement, fraud, and low literacy level among adults contributed to the overwhelming disappointment and disbelief in education and educational institutions (Roberson & Brown, 2007; Sulentic Dowell, 2009).

Hurricane Katrina, the subsequent levee failures, and ensuing flooding throughout New Orleans, dispersed the population to a variety of cities and states (Horne, 2006; Saltman, 2007).

Those that stayed in Louisiana were provided with FEMA assistance such as trailers, subsidized food, and temporary transportation. However, not all of the displaced population was reached by such efforts. For many, the displacement became permanent. As of 2006, less than half of the city's pre-storm population of 460,000 returned, putting that year's population at roughly what it was in 1880 (Nossiter, 2006). According to Census of 2010, the population of New Orleans is 343,829 (US Census Bureau, 2011). The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE): Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (2008) reported Louisiana's total decrease of homeless student enrollment from 118,351 in 2005-06 to 34,102 in 2006-07, which appears initially to be encouraging. However, those statistics do not account for all of the children impacted by the hurricanes who became part of the voluntary/involuntary exodus. Such a significant change is "most likely attributable to the impact of natural disasters, especially in the states most impacted by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes - these states, such as Louisiana and Texas, would logically report a decrease from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007," (NCHE, 2008, p. 5). Perhaps more families would have returned sooner if the educational landscape became more responsive to the needs of children and their families, and also included cultural and identity reinforcing aspects that reaffirmed their rich history. However, a deeper exploration of the cultural relevant approach is needed to determine whether indeed culture and identity play important roles.

Terms Defined

To better understand their meaning and their use in the post-disaster context several terms need to be clarified. It is necessary to define several terms, including culture, as they are referenced in this study.

Culture

The concept of culture gained recognition and perplexity from various fields (Rice, 1980). However, culture is complex, and no consensus exists on one precise definition (Geertz, 2000). Considering its pervasive nature in all the aspects of human life, it has inspired many studies to be conducted on its contributing factors and roles in shaping contexts and our meaning-making. At this juncture, I will use the operational definition by Curry (2005) who described culture which

is embodied in the social practices, products, institutions, and minds of living, experiencing, thinking, affectively-engaged human agents who use culture as a resource in specific contexts according to their needs, desires, roles, gender, and power and economic status. Culture emerges in these specific contexts and, thus is a complex, contested, and unfinished phenomenon, (p. 64).

Cultural Relevance

Cultural relevance is a form of pedagogy where learning, “is a socially mediated process and related to students' cultural experiences,” (Irvine, 2010, p. 58). Culture is understood as a guide to shape behavior and make meaning of the environment, as well as assimilating outside-of-classroom experiences into the curriculum (Au, 2006; Bruner, 1996; Camilleri, 1986; Irvine, 2010), while maintaining both home, community and classroom cultures distinct (Au, 2006). Cultural relevant teaching requires using methodologies, approaches and customs that are compatible with local practices or specific to given populations in the effort to promote and attain academic achievement (Au, 2006, Hilliard, 2003).

Identity

The concept of ‘identity’ has been a turbulent topic in the discourse of social sciences. Particularly, the differentiation between ‘self’ and ‘identity’ has proven to be even more tumultuous and deserves its own discussion. I acknowledge that great philosophical differences

exist. However, for the purposes of this study, I will be using both self and identity, interchangeably to refer to the same concept. With that said, “identities are often personal and political projects in which we participate, empowered to greater or lesser extents by resources of experience and ability, culture and social organization,” (Calhoun, 1994, p. 28). Yet, the role of identity in post disaster contexts and education has been largely unexplored and therefore will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Surrealism

The idea of surrealism in this work came about from anecdotal data and interviews with evacuees who referred to their experiences with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as ‘surreal.’ The origins of ‘surrealism’ can be found in the works of Apollinaire who first coined the term in 1918 in his work called *Calligrammes* (Rosemont, 1978, p. 12) as a means to describe something beyond one’s conscious thought. The subsequent philosophy, literary, and art movements were then developed and spearheaded by André Breton, in his revolutionary work *Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924. The essence of surrealism entails a struggle against contemporary dominant political thought while encroaching on the borders of Freudian understandings of the subconscious as a form of resistance (Breton, 1924). Considering the controversial nature of the socialist-driven philosophical and literary movement, I will resort to using the contributions of the art movement and its forms of media, primarily bricolage.

Bricolage/Bricoleur

Bricoleur literally translated from French means jack-of-all-trades (Levi-Strauss, 1966), a handy-man who uses readily available tools to complete a project. This idea allows for an individual to use any element at hand to solve a problem.

The ‘bricoleur’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability

of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to many particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions, (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17).

However, bricolage also stems from the art technique of *collée*, meaning to glue together, and further evolving to *bricolé*, meaning to use various materials that do not seem to be appropriate together, but which in the end create new meaning/meanings of the oeuvre, or a work of art. The concept of bricolage, as designated by Levi-Strauss in his book *The Savage Mind* (1966), provides an interesting framework for meaning making as well as program development; it is a form where one uses available resources and materials to solve a problem. This concept helps to perceive a phenomenon through an interdisciplinary lens and thus provides a more holistic understanding. Thereby, bricolage finds multifarious solutions while exposing the complex nature of phenomena in cultural settings (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

Context

To begin understanding culture and people, it is necessary to become acquainted and familiar with the context in which all social elements interact. According to Scharfstein (1989):

Context is that which environs the object of our interest and helps by its relevance to explain it. The enviroing may be temporal, geographical, cultural, cognitive, emotional – of any sort at all. Synonyms for *context*, each with its own associations, are words such as *environment*, *milieu*, *setting*, and *background*, (p. 1).

Thus it is vital to understand and recognize all the elements that surround individuals and how context has shaped their lives and their culture. Describing the lives of study participants without their context will not provide the full scope of the impact that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had on their lives or their communities.

Recontextualization

Recontextualization refers to the new trend in international educational development literature, which increasingly takes context and culture into consideration when developing educational responses to disaster (Crossley, 2002; Kagawa, 2005; Tabulawa, 2003). However, in practical terms this concept has not yet gained full momentum or wide acceptance.

Disaster

This is a general term referring to any events of cataclysmic proportions that caused a multitude of human or property loss. I consciously avoid referencing governmental responses or their classifications. More precisely here, disaster includes: man-made or natural disasters such as war, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. Further, the meaning of disaster here is used in this study as applicable to people, “disaster is something that happens to people, affecting their persons, emotions, perceptions, expectations and capacity to lead their lives in their usual manner,” (Silberbauer, 2003, p. 30). I will only be referring to the disaster that took place suddenly, as opposed to those, which have a gradual onset.

Internally Displaced Population (IDP)

Populations affected by armed conflict, violence, human rights violation and/or disasters, and forced to leave their homes but not moving beyond borders of their own country, are classified as an Internally Displaced Population (IDP). In most cases, such movements are considered involuntary and result in the loss of community networks, access to services, and frequently, livelihoods (www.idpproject.com). In many cases, IDP settlements are put in place where they “tend to perpetuate political persecution imported from the country or region of origin and aggravate intergroup or intragroup tensions, so that occupants are not free from fear of oppression, reprisal, or humiliation,” (Leaning, 2001, p. 1433). By this definition, New

Orleanians are considered as IDPs, considering the post-Katrina and Rita population movements and the emergence of FEMA trailer parks where they were housed.

International Responses

International responses refer mainly to international organizations' reactions to human rights violations and assistance to those who are vulnerable due to disaster or catastrophe. In the case of United Nations (UN) organizations, responses include providing shelter, food, water, and only recently, educational aid (Kagawa, 2005). The main distinction between Delta Express Program (DEP) and international responses is found in their timeframes; DEP existed for over three years, whereas international responses often take precedence in the first couple of months and quickly expect for local organizations to take over.

Biopolitics

Biopolitics is concerned with population as a political and scientific problem, as a biological issue that requires the exercise of power to manage and control, in the effort to regularize the society. The driving force of biopolitics is bio-power. Through the exercise of bio-power, governing bodies have the potential to dictate who may receive help and who does not; in other words, those that do not contribute to the economy or society are deemed disposable (Olssen, 2006; Saltman, 2007).

Deculturalization

Using the definition of deculturalization as it is described by Joel Spring (1997), "the educational process of destroying a people's culture and replacing it with a new culture," (p. 1) is employed in this study. This concept utilization will be used to portray how New Orleans evacuees struggled to maintain their identity in the context of forced deculturalization and assimilation to now local culture.

Importance of Study

In recent time, the world has experienced several additional disasters to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, from Haiti's earthquake, landslides in Brazil and Colombia to Japan's tsunami disasters, to tornadoes in United States; the world is constantly in demand for responsive programs. However, in most cases culture is not considered a significant element in post-disaster planning, much less inclusion of culture in education programming. Therefore, the exploration of how cultural elements in post-disaster education programming influenced the longevity and the responsiveness of DEP will be worth examining. However, examining cultural elements that influence our day-to-day activities cannot be studied by just one lens. I identified three main frameworks, allowing me to examine my data and my own experiences working with Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees. Anthropology, sociology, and education each provide compelling means of investigating the complexity of culture and meaning making, as well as the difficulty for cultural growth during turbulent times.

In order to fully understand this particular dynamic, one must take a quick historical journey, beginning in early 1900s in India. The work of Gandhi stemmed from his conviction to find Truth, a spiritual and physical quest to achieve justice for all as well as equal treatment while reinforcing cultural identity. In doing so, Gandhi greatly contributed to education, which he believed should take place within cultural traditions and be accessible to all. This idea grew out of his awareness how the colonial rule changed the educational landscape into a more elitist system disconnected from Indian life. Gandhi believed that education should not solely be based on the abilities to read, write, and do arithmetic but instead on humanity. Gandhi strove to develop an "education system, which would give the people a sense of self-respect and the skills

to be able to educate themselves in a way that would make them responsible for their own lives, individually as well as collectively,” (Palmer, 2002, p. 221).

Similarly, despite Jerome Bruner’s primary focus on cognitive psychology and in particular, cognitive development, over time, he observed how the environment, and specifically culture, influenced the shaping of a human mind. From early 1960s and on, Bruner began his journey of research on psychological aspects of human cognitive development, as well as, the anthropological influence on the shaping of thought and actions. In Bruner’s *The Culture of Education* (1996) he explained how learners come to understand reality through symbolism that is shared by community members. The interdependency of these modes did not develop in stages, but depended upon the presence of the others. “This symbolic mode is not only shared by a community, but conserved, elaborated, and passed on to succeeding generations who, by virtue of this transmission, continue to maintain the culture’s identity and way of life,” (Bruner, 1996, p. 3). In other words, culture can be understood as a form of a toolkit that helps us to organize and construct meaning of the elements that surround us in a comprehensive and comprehensible ways. Further, in *Man: A Course of Study* (1965) Bruner explains how tools and toolkits helped in the evolutionary survival of the species. Yet it was the improvisation of tools from previously constructed tools or from surrounding materials that gave an edge to those cultures that survived longer due to such innovation.

Therefore, one becomes cognizant and proficient of the tools available; it is easier to depict the extent of cultural practices and how they can be applied elsewhere. That is the essence of Levi-Strauss’ *bricoleur*. As a research stance, a bricoleur understands that everything surrounding him or her is positioned in a particular context and is resplendent with complexity and unpredictability. Therefore, research and analysis through the eyes of a bricoleur becomes an

act of negotiation and constant quest for understanding of relationships of social locals and personal history (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). I select this research stance throughout the study as it permits me to examine the phenomenon of Renaissance Village while considering all aspects of uncertainty.

This study may provide a lens and result in a guide or blueprint, in considering culture and identity as main driving forces in developing new responsiveness education programming in post-disaster contexts. This study also attempts to define and understand what implications culturally relevant programs will have on communities as well as the surrounding educational landscape. By using RV and DEP as an example, this study provides a specific look into post-Katrina education responses that were applied by various entities, and how they affected the evacuees' lives. In the following chapters, I will further expound on the two concepts and their relevance in education but in particular the post-disaster circumstances. Chapter 2 will provide an extensive review of literature on culture and identity and their significance in theoretical perspectives. Chapter 3 will explicate the importance and usage of surrealism, as it refers to the art movement, its theoretical perspectives as applicable to understanding and viewing disaster. Further, the concept of bricoleur and bricolage will be explained as surrealist forms of media to demonstrate the development of culturally relevant programs in non-traditional contexts, as well as the construction of a surrealist portrait. Chapter 4 will explain portraiture research methodology.

Chapter 2: Why Cultural Identity is Important

Nothing transpires in a cultural vacuum.

-Lehman, 2004, p. 704

“Society without culture seems to be a monstrosity comparable to the proverbial headless calf,” (Bauman, 1973, p. 47). Discourse on culture is particularly complex, especially when discussing the New Orleans population. This particular group can find its essence in bricolage explicated further on. The population’s roots are found in Native American tribes, displaced Acadians from Canada, Germans, New World’s Spaniards, French and British colonists and the myriad ethnic African and Afro-Antillean slaves, to the immigrants, who then morphed into what we call today Louisianans (Sublette, 2009). Further, understanding what it means to be from New Orleans and then being forced to move to a city such as Baton Rouge due to a meteorological event and its impact, forms the nucleus of this proposed study. One assumes that such movement would not cause too much consternation; however, those who have never come in contact with the proud New Orleans people can only make such assumptions.

To undertake the subject of culture is no easy task. Considering “no one is quite sure what culture is” (Geertz, 2000, p. 11); yet it is still a widely explored concept especially in the fields of anthropology, sociology, philosophy and many others. Currently, there is no consensus on the exactly definition (Berger, 1995; Geertz, 2000; Rice, 1980). The etymology of ‘culture’ will not be attempted here and neither the discourse on ‘Culture’ versus ‘Kultur’ which connotes progression of values and development of ‘civilization (Camilleri, 1986), for these deserves oeuvres, or works of art, on their own. However, there are several aspects of ‘culture’ that can be explored and that are consistent throughout the body of literature in all areas. Therefore, I will explore those aspects and their applicability to the mystical allure of New Orleans culture and its

people, the positioning of New Orleans evacuees in new cultural boundaries, particularly East Baton Rouge and Baker, LA, and explore how cultural aspects became part of the Delta Express Program.

Why Look at Culture?

Culture has many definitions, all of which attribute abstract concepts in guiding human behaviors.

Not only is it [culture] an essentially contested concept, like democracy, religion, simplicity, or social justice; it is a multiply defined one, multiply employed, ineradicably imprecise. It is fugitive, unsteady encyclopedic, and normatively charged, and there are those, especially those for whom only the really real is really real, who think it vacuous altogether, or even dangerous, and would ban it from the serious discourse of serious persons, (Geertz, 2000, p. 11).

What seems as an ephemeral meaning of culture, I would argue, can be attributed the constant dynamism of human behavior as part of causality to the environment. Culture is an entity of order and disorder; a tool that helps us cope with social turbulences while rattling our social and worldly equilibrium (Bauman, 1999). Acknowledgement of this unsteady environment provides a wide range of spatial perceptions. In this chapter I present consistencies among definitions and theories that include values, social behaviors, creations and understandings of cultural constructs; in other words, what elements to consider when looking at culture, and how do cultures evolve when faced with cataclysmic, disruptive events.

Looking at culture through a macroscopic as opposed to microscopic perspective allows considering prominent powers to be seen, such as history, geography, and even climatology. All of which set the stage for particular behaviors to emerge. To understand what happens after a disaster and how people respond, we must first consider all elements that influence behavior – culture being one of the main forces.

Culture as a Common Paradigm

Culture can also be understood as a form of social paradigm, with unique and particular borders and parameters for common behavior and understanding of one's context, while creating a sense of place (Bauman, 1999; Geertz, 2000). A good example of such a paradigm is the collection of distinct neighborhoods that made up New Orleans, known as Wards. Such a paradigm provides fertile ground for all decisions and judgments to be based upon cultural soundness and reasoning upon group consensus in the effort to make a particular group or neighborhood distinct from another, yet united. Further, when faced with adversities, "a particular cultural paradigm is likely to be adopted when it offers a consensually validated, conventionalized solution to a problem," (Lehman et al., 2004, p. 701). It can provide a form of a guideline to reactions and behaviors that would be deemed culturally acceptable, especially when events, like post-Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, took place. Individuals responded accordingly to their cultural paradigm at a time when immediate decisions needed to be made under time pressure (Chiu et al., 2000; Lehman et al, 2004); some responded by evacuating, depending on their means and availability of transportation, others proceeded to organize traditional responses such as hurricane parties (Horne, 2006).

As mentioned before, culture is not a static entity (Hilliard, 2002). With new circumstances at hand, changes are made, paradigms are furthered, and individuals in many cases become more unified. Adding the repertoire of solutions to group knowledge helps in navigating similar situations. In post-Katrina and Rita south Louisiana, the experience of inundation was beyond previous scope of knowledge, hence a complete sense of helplessness developed overall. However, as time wore on, the cultural paradigm strengthened the evacuees' endeavor to ensure

no loss of identity of whom they were and where they came from. At Renaissance Village (RV) and in Baker, this was clearly evident when a new set of rivalries emerged, even at schools. “The marginals are alternately hated and granted superhuman powers because they embody this perennial fount of the most intense and gripping of all human fears,” (Bauman, 1973, p. 129). The 225 versus 504—the numbers depicted area codes, 225 for East Baton Rouge and 504 for New Orleans—caused a major change of perception. It was no longer which neighborhood you were from, but rather which city you claimed as your own. Many students who lived in RV frequently mentioned in informal conversations examples of being bullied by the locals in their schools and related how, previously in New Orleans, they only needed to worry about one or two neighborhoods which did not get along with theirs. Now they were worried about an entire new city being against them. Moreover, at RV, many learned to look past their old New Orleans neighborhood adversities to navigate the new environment and, together, look for elements that would strengthen their communalities. Thus, in this case, the paradigm grew to encompass all New Orleans neighborhoods and consequently strengthened the city bond when faced with common ‘hardship’.

Culture as Full of Abstractions

According to Bruner (1996), the abstract notions that constitute culture make it difficult to sometimes distinguish what elements make up its definition and how far it reaches. Since culture is about people, and people are repeatedly in constant flux with their environment – such flux contributes to the furthering of the collective effort to understand our purpose and identity (Au, 2006; Hilliard, 2002). Consequently, what we call ‘culture’ really consists of abstract elements creating a cohesive understanding of group identity that effectively interacts with our environment and created history.

Therefore, “cultural patterns are the ones which help structure each group the most extensively, the most profoundly and the most enduringly in a relative sense, and are most apt to maintain the group’s unity despite disunifying factors,” (Camilleri, 1986, p. 14). In this effort, the shared understood history, and even shared experience, facilitates a main unifying power. Thus, the hurricanes and events immediately after, strengthened the evacuees’ conviction to adhere to their ‘Nawlin’s’ culture. Though at first, I did not really understand the significance of one’s self-identifier –‘I’m from New Orleans’—, which seemed to be a common phrase thrown around at the time; it quickly made me question why this was important to them. Since the evacuees moved to Baton Rouge, still within the state parameters, why did they identify themselves so vehemently with the city of New Orleans? And why did Baton Rougeans agree that they were not ‘one of us’? These abstract notions haunted me. It was upon talking with DEP participants that I became aware of the city’s uniqueness and how it molded their identity.

Hermes (2005) describes the natural evolution of culture as something that is knowable and contained to something fluid and complex. Geertz (2000) goes further to depict that “the study of other peoples’ cultures involves discovering who they think they are, what they think they are doing, and to what end they think they are doing it,” (p. 16). The creation of identity thus resembles a constant juxtaposition of elements that are constantly exchanged, added on, and replaced. Not only are the elements intangible and abstract, they are also commonly agreed upon.

Cultures can be conceived as elaborate exchange systems, with media of exchange as varied as respect, goods, loyalty, and services. Exchange systems...are further legitimized by a complex symbolic apparatus of myths, statutes, precedents, ways of talking and thinking, and even uniforms, (Bruner, 1996, p. 29-30).

The feeling of belonging to a particular group appropriates for an individual a sense of place, i.e. ‘I am New Orleans’; thus linking them to a larger geographic area and embodying the spirit of loyalty to what makes the city. Therefore, the amalgamation of values, behaviors, and attitudes

represented by the populations occupying New Orleans prior to the hurricanes, was something that the evacuees knew well and cherished. Thus their pride in where they came from, historically and geographically, was undeniably a stronghold, which not always was identified as an important element in post-disaster response.

The goal is to feel that one is a valuable member of a meaningful culture, which in turn evokes a feeling of symbolic immortality that mitigates the fear of finitude. One hypothesis is that feelings of self-worth buffer against existential anxiety, (Lehman et al. 2004, p. 692).

Hence, acknowledging and bringing their sense of pride and what constitutes that pride to the forefront of disaster response perhaps could have served as an abstract guideline to consider. Since culture, as portrayed thus far, helps in coping and adjusting to the dynamic environment, it should also be considered as a toolkit with useful strategies and elements.

Culture as a Set of Tools

Culture could be perceived as a set of tools, which are categorized based on particular needs and occasions (Bauman, 1973; Berger, 1995; Camilleri, 1986). This includes types of mores, customs, and habits that identify each group uniquely in how they deal with their reality and the types of celebrations they necessitate; in this case Mardi Gras, second lines, and various other types of festivities that follow and the roles that individuals play in these activities. In other words, culture is “a set of strategies constituting a repertoire—instruments, like hammers, wristwatches, and bureaucratic memos that get us through our days and help us make it through the night,” (Berger, 1995, p. 8). All of these are based on cultural consensus developed over a period of time (Au, 2006; Bauman, 1971, 1999; Camilleri, 1986; Geertz, 2000). “Cultural consensuses are those which, synchronically speaking, are diffused furthest throughout the group, above and beyond divisions and oppositions between subgroups and, diachronically speaking, are most lasting through time,” (Camilleri, 1986, p.13). Such cultural agreements are

easier to achieve in this instance since the conversation revolves around New Orleans. The mosaic of immigrant and colonizing influences all assisted in bringing new sets of cultural tools (Sublette, 2009); and though at times such influences caused disturbances, in the end, they manifested themselves as additional volumes to the library of cultural knowledge.

Further, culture can be perceived as a source for the creation of cultural products, such as specific kinds of skills, communication habits, dialects, and modes of utilizing and adapting to the environment (Bauman, 1973; Bruner, 1965; Camilleri, 1986); a majority of which contribute in the effort to transmit cultural aspects to the next generations (Bauman, 1999).

Culture promotes, encourages, and sustains ways of being, and in turn these then seem natural and ubiquitous. This makes clear the pitfalls of interpreting any given culturally based practice without first considering its relation to the cultural context, (Lehman et al., 2004, p. 704).

Hence, all cultural products have to be considered within their particular context in order to understand their usage and applicability. That is not to say that cultural products cannot be interpreted and understood by those who do not come from the origin of the following. On the contrary, as Geertz (2000) suggested, only through such interpretations and comparisons can the unique nature of such products be revealed. Having come from Poland and experienced other cultures, affords me a particular perspective that allows me to conduct such comparisons with sufficient lens to recognize what makes individual groups distinctive and their cultural products idiosyncratic. For example, ‘hurricane parties’ developed as a coping mechanism for those living in the pathway of hurricane trajectories in Louisiana. New Orleans is particularly famous for the extent of such celebrations (Horne, 2008). The origin of these parties stems from an inability to predict the storm’s path and evacuate from the city. The reason to keep families close by in a time of uncertainty of what a storm might bring clearly sounds legitimate, especially since most of the population of New Orleans, throughout history, have not had the means to evacuate.

Katrina was no different. However, most individuals from other states and abroad, not knowing the history behind such adaptation methods, interpreted the hurricane parties in August, 2005, as disregard for their government's warnings and their lives (Billings, 2008; Horne, 2008).

However, what really transpired was a culture embracing an "event, object, phenomenon or, to borrow a term from psychology, any 'stimulus' originating in our environment," (Camilleri, C.1986, p. 10) and developing a mode of adaptation with a touch of libations. Consequently, family niches were strengthened and the connectivity between individuals became a vital force in gaining a placement in the job force, in the community, and in the neighborhoods. However, after Katrina and Rita, those niches were completely destroyed; and, as we will see later, losing such linkages made the recovery for most individuals a difficult task since they now had to tread the waters of new environments by themselves.

Yet, those were not the only forces at play. Culture, as discussed thus far, is a set of abstractions and tools that help individuals cope with everyday life. But it is also important to explore the different powers of influence that manifest themselves around us. Though culture serves as a binding element, it is still necessary "to gain a working familiarity with the frames of meaning within which they enact their lives," (Geertz, 2000, p. 16). Considering that the primary subjects of the study are displaced New Orleanians, it is fundamental to understanding the essence of place (New Orleans) and how their identity has been shaped. To fully grasp the extent of influences and how they all amalgamated into this one entity of New Orleans, consider the bricolage of environments at play and the final kaleidoscope that defines New Orleans culture. A first step is to consider the geographical, topological, and historical elements that comprise New Orleans culture.

Influential Environments

Perhaps the best starting point is the geography and topology of place (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992) in which this research is rooted. Louisiana is the nation's drainpipe.

"Approximately 41 percent of the runoff of the continental United States—water from as far away as New York State and Montana—flows down the Mississippi River past New Orleans on its way to the Gulf of Mexico," (Sublette, 2009, p. 9). The majority of lower Louisiana is predominantly a bayou ecosystem with occasional islands of higher sediments and shifting sandbars.



Figure 1. Map of United States, Louisiana and New Orleans (St. Philip the Deacon, n.d.)

It is no wonder that 19th century travelers described this part of the world as “mud, mud, mud,” (Latrobe, 1819). It is in this environment, and on a slightly higher ground, that New Orleans has found its birthplace, at the mouth of the Mississippi river, where it came to accommodate ships of all sizes and depths from Canada and the Caribbean. This crescent shaped bay quickly became one of the largest and most important trading spots in the entire South (Sublette, 2009).

Taking into account the meteorological and geological environments, Louisiana does not always seem an ideal place to settle. The scenery is predominantly bayou-ridden which after any rain seems to expand their border further inland. The constant pell-mell of ocean currents and winds, one can never be sure whether a hurricane is approaching—its magnitude, the type of devastation it might cause, or worse, the amount of casualties it may claim. Even today, with our technological advancements we still cannot fully predict the breadth of a storm nor how people will react (Cooper & Block, 2006). It is precisely thanks to those elements that coping behaviors were developed over an extensive period of time, and eventually molded into elements of our culture. Prime examples are, again, the “hurricane parties” and evacuation planning.

The idea of evacuating the city due to a storm is a fairly new phenomenon. For decades evacuation was not even an option—it simply took too long. With the development of Interstate-10 and other major highways, evacuation plans eventually became an option and later a government mandate (Sublette, 2009). It is a matter of adjustment and adaptation to the turbulence in the environments that call for changes in behavior as well as contribute to the constant evolution of practices that later ascribe a cultural value. Geertz (2000) and Berger (1995) agree that without dissonance in the environment adaptive behaviors would never be able to emerge since communal behaviors are the ones that ground us.

As a historical and economic power in its nearly 300 years of existence, New Orleans, particularly, has experienced its share of social shifts. Its history is unlike any other in the United States, hence its mystical allure.

Historical Fluxes

Diverse slave and immigrant populations brought with them a series of Afro-cultural aspects that are still witnessed today. Native Indian, African, Creole, Cajun, Acadian, Antillean,

Gens du Couleurs, German, Croatian, Irish Catholic, Italian, and Anglo-Protestant all contributed to the amalgamation that is New Orleans. Each population's contribution is representative of their time period, but without them New Orleans would not possess such richness. While extremely important, the historical environment is not the only one that needs to be considered.

Though Louisiana is part of the historical South, it sets itself apart due to influences from various colonizing groups and their European mandates; for example, the Catholic affiliation imposed by the French and Spanish. Those two groups set the stage for Catholicism to persist even with the eventual Anglo-American Protestant settlers. Further, each of the three groups brought with them their own unique slave regime (Horne, 2006; Sublette, 2009). In the 17th century, the French settlers implemented Code Noir (Black Code) which included regulations of treatment of slaves, conditions under which they could be set free, and which religions could be practiced (Sublette, 2009). A prime example is the distinction of parishes versus counties.

In the brief time that Spaniards ruled Louisiana, laws pertaining to slaves were a lot more tolerant and humane compared to those of the French. For example, slaves were allowed to buy their freedom, open their own businesses, and educate their children in both reading and writing. Further, on designated days, they were allowed to congregate and practice their religions (Sublette, 2009). This was the origin of the gatherings in Congo Square, which is located today adjacent to the French Quarter and in the location of Louis Armstrong Park. It was under Spanish rule that city planning was implemented and pedestrian walkways were constructed. The French Quarter was built with Spanish dollars, but due to strong sentiment toward the French connection it remained named the "French Quarter." It could be argued that the Spanish reign in Louisiana was the most significant for New Orleans due to its tolerance, infrastructure and ease of cultural influence proliferation. Furthermore, the Spaniards' influence extended throughout

the Caribbean, particularly to what is today Cuba. The Havana connection became one of the most critical connections that not only shaped Afro-Louisiana population, but also expanded trading routes. From the port of Havana, more ships traveled into the Antilles and its major islands, such as that of Hispaniola, consequently contributing to strong cultural exchanges.

At the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century the French settlers and soon, the Anglo-Americans, were extremely afraid of the consequences brought upon by the Dessalines led Saint-Domingue uprising, also known as the Haitian Revolution. The slave uprising against the French colonizers was constantly on the minds of slave owners in Louisiana and across the United States. The next century was fraught with the dissolution of any connections with the Caribbean islands; all due to fear for the sole reason that slaves might rise against their white owners. “A census of New Orleans at this time [1805] counted 3,551 whites, 1,566 free people of color, and 3,105 slaves. It was, as it would be until the 1830s (and again, beginning in the 1970s) a Black-majority city” (Sublette, 2009, p. 246); there was reason for fear. But it was for that particular reason that rights of slaves and free people of color to congregate, dance, and even to practice their adaptation of Voodoo religion were never prohibited. Further, foreign slave trade was incrementally discontinued due to a fear that bringing in slaves who had heard of or participated in the uprising. It gave birth to domestic slave trading, primarily centered in the Carolinas, but it contributed to a strengthening of sense of identity for slaves and free people of color.

For example, in 1812, Faubourg Tremé, one of Gens du Couleurs and a plantation owner, converted his land into a neighborhood for freed people of color. Seeing the political environment growing increasingly hostile toward his people, he dedicated his lands in defiance. Since the construction of New Orleans, rebellion against the colonizers became the norm for

those who populated the area throughout its history. Thus, bricolage manifested itself by using what was readily available to the individuals, all in the efforts to defy the Anglo-American status quo.

Other forms of defiance stemming from the shores of New Orleans and Louisiana also included the earliest noted interracial marriages, the mingling of races in urban spaces, various forms of black market trading, and even piracy. The most infamous pirate was Jean Lafitte who smuggled slaves from the Caribbean and stole Spanish silver from a multitude of frigates. Such acts and efforts of insolence, as perceived by Anglo-Americans and many visitors, became synonymous with the unique identity of those from New Orleans. Hence, the compilation of influences and varying periodic reputations greatly contributed to the general allure and character of the city and its people. Such fluid interactions were only possible thanks to the porous nature of cultural environments, but the question arises about the existence of borders (Calhoun, 1976; Curry, 2005). It is clear that borders existed, such as city limits. However, it can be assumed that those are not the only ones to consider as contributing to the complexity of understanding who the people of New Orleans are.

Border Crossing

The issue with borders, as with environments, is that there are so many to consider. At first glance, it might be easy to suppose that we are only transplanting a group of individuals from one city to another. In this instance, I am not including all the evacuees who have been bused to other states, but rather focusing on all those who eventually came to reside in Baton Rouge and its nearby areas. As mentioned before, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita did not discriminate between rich or poor, White or Black, or other minority populations (Horne, 2006). Every New Orleans neighborhood was affected. For the water, there was no such thing as

borders, only release from its man-made clutches. As a result of the levee failures, all walks of life from New Orleans found themselves impacted by the same conditions, in the same state of Louisiana, yet completely different in terms of cultural geography.

Baton Rouge was chosen as the state capitol in response to New Orleans libations and licentiousness, and in order to restore the reputation and the faith in the state of Louisiana, its economy and government (Horne, 2006). Though only 80 miles away from the original state capitol, Baton Rouge culture only slightly resembles that of New Orleans, but maintains its own character. Therefore, in this contemporary instance, one can equate the forced migration of New Orleans population to Baton Rouge as transcultural displacement (Berger, 1995), and further as a case of Internally Displaced Population (IDP).

As mentioned previously, IDPs are those who have been uprooted from their homes due to various forms of violence, conflict, natural or man-made disasters, but not displaced beyond the boundaries or borders of one's country (Brennan, 2001; Deng, 1998; Leaning, 2001; Salama & Spiegel). In the first months of following the disaster of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the media struggled with appropriate terminology to describe New Orleans people and the phenomenon that made them leave. "The names given to marginals [those set aside by society or circumstance] fluctuate from epoch to epoch, from society to society; the names reflect historically effectuated, unique selections of concepts and images, typical of a given cultural code in a given time," (Bauman, 1973, p. 129). Initially, the conversations described them as "refugees." However, according to United Nations, the international definition of a refugee is a person who,

Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country,

(UNHCR, Article 1, The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

In many cases the refugee term is easily misused, as seen in case of those affected by the hurricanes. The people affected did not leave due to fear factors, nor did they leave the borders of their own country. Therefore, the usage was unfounded. Shortly after, a new term was applied, that of an 'evacuee,' which seemed more appropriate because it does not come with any internationally specific or legal definition (Horne, 2006), and it encompassed general causality for removing someone from a place of danger. Nonetheless, the sheer size of the forced exodus clearly illuminates that another international term should be used, that of IDPs. However, this term equally brings another set of ambiguities.

Unlike responses for refugees, there are not clear policies or rights addressing vulnerability and even appropriateness of programmatics for IDPs.

Displaced [population] by fighting or repression, their situation is generally even more precarious than that of refugees; yet they do not qualify for any form of international protection. Humanitarian organizations are sometimes able to provide assistance, but this is often random and inadequate as the displaced may well be trapped... It is not only insecurity and related transport problems that have to be overcome: there may also be a determined refusal by some of the belligerents to allow any aid to reach populations sheltering in 'hostile' zones,' (Medecins Sans Frontiers, 1997, p. 15).

The degree and intensity of the flooding left many Louisianans seeking help from unusual sources. Their journey began by seeking help from friends and family in other cities like Baton Rouge, then on to shelters, church groups, and even resorting to accepting accommodations from strangers in their homes. Many would argue that if such circumstances took place in another country, international organizations would immediately become part of the response teams. However, that was not the case, partially due to the fact that "no specific international humanitarian agency is responsible for providing them (IDPs) with protection and

humanitarian assistance,” (Salama, Spiegel, & Brennan, 2001, p. 1430). Therefore, it fell upon the national and local government to provide assistance. In this case, in the United States, that role is embodied by FEMA, which established trailer parks to provide temporary housing for those affected across the state, but primarily around the Baton Rouge area. From there, it was both government and non-profit organizations that took over the overwhelming task of rebuilding the evacuees’ lives.

A majority of responses dealt with basic human necessities (water, food, shelter). Very few were intended for long-term programming. Ideally, “relief community imposes an obligation both to provide help and to learn how to improve the quality of that help,” (Leaning, 2001, p. 1433). As reiterated before, FEMA emphasized that that type of housing was intended to be temporary, and as a result people should not have plan on staying there for too long. What FEMA did not anticipate at the time was the fragile mental state of the evacuees and the loss of social networks and family niches which prevented them from being able to move on or return home, and how all those factors impeded them from even considering moving to and staying in a new city. To fully understand what elements played a significant role in the difficulty of adjusting in this transcultural crossing, we must further discuss what constitutes one’s identity and how those factors are embodied.

Culture and Identity

The concepts of culture and identity are main forms of making meaning of social interactions and environmental events. Considering the constant flux of elements in our surroundings, culture and identity both serve as springboards for interpretation of such fluxes. They are our reference points from which we begin to construct understanding (Bauman, 2007, 1973). While culture is a much broader concept, it is no less influential. All negotiations of

meaning take place in a polity with other individuals who share elements of politics, history, behaviors and language (Calhoun, 1994). It is precisely with that shared knowledge that one comes to recognize oneself as part of a group. Therefore, ‘identity’ is embedded in every social structure, i.e. culture. However, each possesses its own unique form of becoming and finding oneself within, and what elements help in affirming, reaffirming, or infringing its development (Bauman, 2007; Calhoun, 1994; Rosaldo, 2003). It is necessary to explore the notion of ‘identity’ as it has been thus far understood and how it applies to education and post disaster programming.

The discourse on ‘identity’, ‘self’ and ‘I,’ can be found in multiple social sciences’ literature. However, most in depth discussions take place in areas of philosophy and psychology. Philosophical endeavors seek to understand how one develops the ‘self’ and the ‘I’ into a coherent whole which then in turn can easily be then specified as ‘I am.’ From Socratic ‘self’ that emphasizes rational self-examination; to Hegelian ‘self’ which holds spiritual significance as its core value; to Marxist’s ‘self’ as it is understood in a socialist society; to Foucault’s ‘self’ as it triangulates between itself and its surrounding in search of ‘truth’. Yet, in Western philosophy and education, the ‘self’ is largely explored through Deweyian democratic education theory, where the goal of education is the development of ‘self’. The psychological discourse, in turn, largely entails how the ‘self’ and ‘I’ develop and what outside factors contribute to the current ‘I’ and how one becomes aware of the ‘self’. However, to bring the discussion to more manageable grounds, I will examine the concept of ‘identity’ through the following lenses:

1. How ‘identity’ is understood in society and culture.
2. How ‘identity’ is understood in education.
3. How ‘identity’ is understood in post disaster education.

Identity as Social and Cultural Construct

According to Calhoun (1994), “we know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made,” (1994, p. 9). In other words, one cannot be distinguished as a unique being, if not compared to someone else. Just as in culture, in order to understand elements that make up a particular culture, they have to be compared to another (Bauman, 1973; Geertz, 2000; Lehman et al., 2004; Rice, 1980). Geertz (1976) argues that culture provides a paradigm in which the evolution of the self can take place, and consequently help manage everyday life. The ‘self’ develops around communal consensus on cultural boundaries that prescribe certain behaviors, and even appropriate emotional responses to circumstances that arise (Abbinnett, 2003; Silberbauer, 2003). Boundaries, in this instance, have to be flexible enough to accommodate human and natural variables, as mentioned before. Consequently, “culture provides a buffer against anxiety by providing a set of values and normative standards against which an individual may be judged as a worthwhile, socially acceptable person” (Lehman et al. 2004, p. 692). Thus, culture and identity are inherently codependent in maintaining a sense of place making or belonging to the group and place in a constantly changing world. Though cultural codes, mores, and norms never fully encompass the entirety of cultural tools that help adapt, they serve as consistency of guidelines for behavior (Bruner, 1993). With that in mind, culture can further assist in defining not only one’s existence in a group, but also what and how the group constructs and understands abstract concepts such as freedom, politics, and education.

Identity in Education

Considering the very nature of education, perpetually in flux and betwixt system within and outside reality, it will never meet the exact needs of all students or the contexts in which it is

found. However, this does not mean scholars should not strive to affect change that could shift the line towards a more responsive approach rather than resigning to traditional systems.

According to philosophy and practices within the last century, the field of education seeks to embrace an individual and present them with tools that would facilitate growth as a contributing member of society. The ‘development of self,’ as ascribed by John Dewey, sought to portray how education helped in the development of active democratic participants. However, Jerome Bruner’s theories serve as a more valuable lens to examine the influences of culture in and on education and ultimately upon the individual.

It is unquestionably the function of education to enable people, individual human beings, to operate at their fullest potential, to equip them with the tools and the sense of opportunity to use their wits, skills, and passions to the fullest. The antinomic counterpart to this is that the function of education is to reproduce the culture that supports it - not only reproduce it, but further its economic, political, and cultural ends, (Bruner, 1996, p. 66).

In other words, education has always served as a tool to propagate socializing processes and a knowledge base deemed politically acceptable by the dominant group (Apple, 2007; Au, 2006; Ferguson & Gupta, 1992; Hilliard, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2002; Saltman, 2007). However, such propagation does not always encompass all cultural variations in the national population. Consequently, inequalities emerge and persist throughout time. Culture, by definition, consists of variables necessary to continue a certain set of behaviors and knowledge (Au, 2006; Bauman, 1973; Bruner, 1996). Since, currently in American education, the only cultural elements that proliferate are Eurocentric (Apple, 2007; Hilliard, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2002, 1995; Saltman, 2007), it is difficult to imagine a curriculum that would involve all varying cultures that exist in each State. That is not to say that it would be impossible to envision such curriculum or, in the least, provide a sufficient amount of flexibility to include additional cultural elements when deemed appropriate. In other words, education should encourage idiosyncratic

learning and talent while maintaining cultural boundaries as evidenced by Bruner.

We need to realize human potential, but we need to maintain a culture's integrity and stability. We need to recognize differing native talent, but we need to equip all with the tools of the culture. We need to respect the uniqueness of local identities and experience, but we cannot stay together as a people if the cost of local identity is a cultural Tower of Babel, (Bruner, 1996, p. 69-70).

Understandably, education is not faced with a monolithic group of children who come with the same cultural baggage. Rather educators are presented with a multivariate group, with each individual struggling to construct their own understanding of the world while mitigating the various cultural environments (Au, 2006; Calhoun, 1976).

We cannot, therefore, content ourselves with bringing students to a level of cultural competence in the same way as we would teach them botany or geology. It must be borne in mind that they are exposed to arguments in their families relative to different ethnic communities and that they have interiorized surrounding stereotypes and prejudices intertwined with social and personal interests and reactions, (Camilleri, 1986, p. 167).

Consequently, culturally relevant pedagogy finds its place in this discussion. Other social science fields have recognized culturally relevant practices. Recently, the need to validate local communities, cultures and their aspects has been increasingly recognized as a necessity in schools and curricula across post-disaster sites.

According to Irvine, culturally relevant pedagogy “has theoretical roots in the notion that learning is a socially mediated process and related to students' cultural experiences,” (Irvine, 2010, p. 58). Culture, as described by Irvine (2010), Au (2006) and Bruner (1996), shapes and guides behavior so that consistency of such can be found from one generation to the next, thus ensuring the progression and longevity of cultural heritage. Further, Au (2006), who developed the pedagogy whilst studying Hawaiian culture, considers several parameters of culture. Among those discussed by Au, two aspects in particular are pertinent to our discussion:

- We can think of culture as long-lasting values, beliefs, and practices that are passed down from generation to generation;
- We can think of culture as involving dynamic processes of change. Even as members of a cultural [sic] group are guided by its long-lasting values, they may simultaneously be adjusting to new circumstances and surroundings. Group members may change their cultural values and practices because of the new environment. In some cases, there will be a clear break with traditional practice, (Au, 2006, p. 9).

While the first aspect relates to continuity and sameness of culture, the second acknowledges the constant flux and need for adaptability to the environment. In other words, while it is valuable to maintain the histories of the elements that bind a group together, at the same time, we must not ignore the perpetual disturbances in everyday life. Such flux, Au goes on to explain, needs to be acknowledged and reflected in school classrooms and curricula adaptable to such. However, these changes cannot exist unless one considers facets of a student, teacher, community, and the curriculum itself, along with how they translate into shaping post-disaster education programming.

Looking at Students and Community

Students who enter through the doorways of our classrooms possess differing cultural baggage. Teachers, who use or plan to use this pedagogy, need to possess a thorough knowledge of their students' lived cultural experiences and home knowledge, in the effort to add strategies to the students' understanding of curricular material (Au, 2006; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings 1994). Particularly, students of diverse backgrounds need to be recognized as they are shaped by their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and primary language (Au, 1993). Research continues that when students' culture is respected and acknowledged in the classroom environment, they are

empowered, embracing more academic engagement (Griffin & Miller, 2007; Osborne, 1996). Culturally relevant pedagogy not only allows for such backgrounds to be included, it also mandates that students, parents and community members be involved in providing cultural information and helping to shape instructional material and pedagogies. In other words, the teacher-student relationships necessitate being open and reciprocal. Teachers need to give students opportunities to act as teachers, (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Upon entering Renaissance Village in April 2006, student participation as informants proved to be one of the most crucial ingredients in designing DEP and in its longevity. Moreover, members of the RV nascent community also proved vital to development since they were the key informants on the nuances of New Orleans culture, its dynamic, and how it applied, or didn't apply, to the new circumstance. Considering that "acculturation and variations of culture across class, gender, age, and region may make it difficult for educators to comprehend fully cultural knowledge as a construct. Therefore, without fully making the effort to understand students and their culture, culturally relevant instruction may be difficult to apply, (Griffin & Miller, 2007, p. 857-858). Their involvement has helped DEP to overcome many difficulties.

Looking at Teachers

One of the most perplexing issues for a teacher is how to successfully construct and perpetuate a culturally relevant program. Schmidt (1999) emphasizes that teachers first need to recognize their own cultural identity as a lens through which they perceive those around them, including their students. "Many teachers who work in schools with large numbers of students of diverse backgrounds do not share the cultural identity of their students," (Schmidt, 1999, p. 10). Admitting to such premises allows for the recognition of cultural misunderstandings.

Teachers who do not share their students' cultural identity, and who are unfamiliar with the community in which the school is located, often bring

views and values to the classroom that differ from those of their students. These differences in perspective may cause teachers to misinterpret students' behavior, resulting in misunderstanding and problems with classroom management, (Au, 2006, p.11).

This was certainly the case with DEP, where most of the LSU faculty and staff did not share the same background of the participants or their parents. However, many LSU students who first volunteered and later assumed leadership roles within the program were from New Orleans. They had an easier time relating to the evacuees, and thus contributed to the program curriculum and activities.

Further, it is vital that a teacher takes the time to recognize an individual learner's core beliefs, acknowledges their cultural experiences (Griffin & Miller, 2007), and, in the end, tries to incorporate these into the curriculum. Such efforts connect to all students' knowledge and validate the relationship between the teacher, the curriculum, and the students. Au encourages teachers to "recognize the negative, socially sustained patterns that hamper the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds, and put new positive patterns in their place," (2006, p. xii). The idea is not to perpetuate the negative aspects of a community, but rather use community forms of learning to help overcome community challenges. The goal for DEP and its participants was to distract students from their circumstances while bringing educational normalcy. Teachers need to be aware that their students come already highly competent in distinguishing the differing demands in literacy at school and in their neighborhood (Ladson-Billings, 2002). Rather than ignore such differences, they need to be addressed and discussed. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), knowledge is not static and needs to be viewed critically by all parties involved in culturally relevant pedagogy. Only through such engagement can teachers scaffold students' knowledge to facilitate understanding and learning for all. Young participants at RV shared their perspectives on their circumstance and what they missed about

New Orleans, and in many cases served as our teachers in understanding the dynamics at RV. To reiterate a teacher's role in cultural relevant pedagogy, I examine in depth the role of teachers to: (a) maintain fluid student-teacher relationships, (b) demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students, (c) develop a community of learners, and (d) encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for another (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480).

Looking at the Curriculum

One of the biggest misconceptions about culturally relevant instruction “is that it involves matching or replicating the home culture in the classroom. This view is incorrect because it overemphasizes the vertical or stable dimension of culture at the expense of the horizontal or changing dimension” (Au, 2006, p. 9-10). Rather, this theoretical construct involves teaching through culture (Ismail & Cazden, 2005), and its primary goals are focused on students' academic achievement and promotion of students' socio-political consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2002). When DEP first started, our instruction began with an attitude and desire to engage children and youth in something educational. However, it was through parent and the nascent community involvement that cultural elements were included and requested. For instance, while helping children practice their multiplication tables, a parent suggested playing Dominos, a game where all plays have to end in a multiple of 5 or 3 or 2. Kids had observed their parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles playing Dominos back in New Orleans and quickly related to the game and its new twist, and thus worked towards their academic achievement. With the inclusion of such cultural elements we were, in fact, working toward Ladson-Billings (2002) cultural competence, where students learn about and begin to appreciate their own culture. “Rather than experiencing the alienating effects of education where school-based learning detaches students from the home culture, cultural competence is a way for students to be

bicultural and facile in the ability to move between school and home cultures,” (Ladson-Billings, 2002, p. 111). Thus, we were building our own culturally responsive instruction that built a bridge between their school, their home, and the city they love.

Another element that was included in DEP curriculum was maintenance of language. The goal of DEP was not to bring school-language or proper English into their midst, but rather to portray how rich New Orleans language and accents were.

Culturally responsive instruction supports students in building or at least maintaining, their competence in the home culture and language. The home culture and language do not simply serve as vehicles that educators can use to give students access to mainstream school processes and content. Rather, the home culture and language are valued for their own sake, (Ladson-Billings, 2002, p. 114).

Being a foreigner proved to be very helpful in that aspect. Both children and parents were always eager to share their words or various pronunciations, for example ‘foil’, as I learned, was pronounced phonetically as ‘ferl,’ or ‘olive oil’ as ‘olive earl,’ and the common lunch special known as a ‘poboy’ stemmed from ‘poor-boy.’ In such fashion, participants of all ages were able to contribute and engage in oral history, with no fear of formal assessment, as in a regular school setting. Our assessments were conducted in multifarious ways. According to Ladson-Billings, “assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence,” (1995, p. 481). As upcoming chapters will discuss, our assessments were primarily informal and relied on students’ academic achievement and their progress.

Delta Express Program

Delta Express Program, as previously mentioned, began simply with the intent to engage children and youth in educational activities and help prepare them for going back to school. In conjunction with a major West Coast institution, Louisiana State University College of Education faculty, staff, and LSU volunteers officially began working on April 2006 out in one

of the few shaded areas in RV. The tent possessed four picnic tables and a bit of gravel inside. However, on the outside dust rose with every step, creating a quick cloud of dusty mysticism surrounding our role there. There were no doors or shutters, the wind blew from one end of the tent to the other. Within seconds, however, summer was upon us and winds slowed down and the heat began to creep in faster with every passing day.

Initially, the plan consisted of developing digital storytelling activities, as developed by a program from a major West Coast institution . Such form of storytelling allows for program participants to discuss elements from their lives that they consider important to them, as a form of therapeutic recovery after a disastrous event or traumatic experience. West Coast program is a service-learning grant program that ties the major West Coast institution's students to afterschool educational activities for at-risk students (Fleener et al., 2007). The idea was to connect New Orleans' children with multiple universities in sharing their stories and finding out their needs and a way to address them. With the support of several local organizations, including Advance Baton Rouge, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) and West Coast institutions directors, we were able to design an initial afterschool program. It was also at this time that Delta Express name came about. DEP was a direct train line that connected West Coast and Louisiana; it only seemed natural to name the program after such a connection, and hence the train tracks on our logo. The funding for the initial stages of the program also has a unique story. David Obst, a screenwriter who wrote the *Revenge of the Nerds* and *Johnny be Good*, wanted to sponsor educational activities for New Orleans children.

However, during the course of the program, facilitating such opportunities became extremely difficult since for the first year of our presence there, we had no access to electricity, much less to the internet. In the effort to at least try to engage students in this fashion during the

summer months, LSU staff and students brought digital cameras and laptops to make PowerPoint stories with additional text. However, this soon became a fruitless effort since RV children were not interested in such activities, but preferred art and sport activities, board games, and lengthy discussions about their circumstance. It was at this juncture that putting RV participants' needs on the forefront of Delta Express became more necessary than our agenda. It was also at this moment that the residents expressed inclusion of elements that reaffirmed their New Orleans identity and culture.

One way of addressing the issue of incorporating cultural relevance into the design of prevention programs is to involve the proposed service recipients themselves in the program planning process. In this way the participants have an active voice in the planning process. The role for practitioners in the scenario may include activities such as advocacy and outreach,” (Griffin & Miller, 2007, p. 855).

Intuitively, methodologies widely used by social work, psychology, and medical services were applied. Yet, further details and ways of proceeding were elusive to us, for there was no blueprint for post-disaster culturally relevant educational programs. “Unfortunately, one of the problems associated with the field is the fact that there are too few examples of well-tested culturally relevant prevention programs available for use with underserved communities,” (Griffin & Miller, 2007, p. 856). That is not to say that we acted on a whim; rather we used multiple voices and expertise to create a responsive program that would address RV residents' identity and needs, and not our own.

In the months following the opening of RV, Rosie O'Donnell donated classroom trailers for education programs to have a proper place to conduct their activities (ABC News, November 1, 2006). However, due to FEMA's insistence on the temporary nature of RV, it took O'Donnell over a year to finally open the doors, and sign a federal lease of the land. The trailers were on the grounds in November of 2005, the official opening ceremony took place October 2006. DEP was

privileged to find its place among Early Head Start, Head Start, and others. It was once again a new setting, with new needs, but now with the most colorful playground and state of the art equipment. Rosie O'Donnell's contributions stayed until the closure of RV, and later were donated to local schools.

Identity in Post-Disaster Education

At the time of a disaster one experiences various forms of social and psychological dissonance. The amount of preparedness for any situation is contingent upon economic, social, and even educational capital that one has gathered over the course of their lives. That is one of the reasons everyone's experience of such events varies. That is why post-disaster context requires a delicate and conscientious approach when addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. In many emergency cases, restarting school functioning has been deemed as a main endeavor to bring about normalcy (Kagawa, 2005). As mentioned in the previous chapter, education has only recently been delineated as an additional pillar of humanitarian aid (Kagawa, 2005). However, a majority of such efforts are largely relinquished to those within the non-profits or are already embedded in the current education system. In both instances, there is no assurance that educational responses will contextually address the needs of the community and be synonymous with a community's understanding of what an educational programming entails.

"Practitioners are often too busy implementing programs to concern themselves with either of these points," (Griffin & Miller, 2007, p. 855). Non-profit organizations enter a site with predetermined goals and objectives based on what they identify as a community or group need. Their involvement in a site would not be needed if they did not possess a specific plan to address a problem. However, what happens after a disaster like hurricanes Katrina and Rita, where entire communities were displaced, family members separated, and their pre-existing

networks no longer exist? Their pre-existing dossier solely defines their role, purpose, and presence at those sites. All the while the community members are not necessarily consulted regarding what their needs are; much less by non-profits or programs that target education. As of this moment, there is no post-disaster education program that puts cultural relevance at the forefront of its efforts, much less tries to emphasize the identity of a particular group of individuals. The only programs that remotely resemble such efforts are those conducted by UNICEF, yet even their programming proceeds with inflexible plans (Little, 2000). I will attempt to show in the next couple of chapters how DEP could be used as a blueprint for future international post-disaster educational programming.

Chapter 3: Surrealist Elements in Disaster

In surrealist philosophy, the ability of an object to evoke mental images, and through them, powerful emotions, is its measure of the marvelous.

– Maurer, 1984

Before delving into discourse on surrealism, it is vital to understand the literary reasons for using a metaphor instead of another literary tool. In Bauman's work, metaphors are used to open and broaden horizons instead of limiting them; "such devices may assist in denaturalizing the world. Metaphors are not only conceptual devices – are potentially reality-shattering and agenda-changing social acts aimed at presenting an image of how the world 'ought' to be or 'should'/'could' be" (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 22) while at the same time hinting at what the world actually looks like. "The greatest thing by far is the command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted to another: it is a mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances," (Aristotle, 2008, p. 32).

The poetic nature of metaphors allows for unconventional associations to be made due to the limitations of jargon from one disciplinary field. It is also an "interpretive link between perception and conception, seeing and understanding" (Bohn, 2002, p. 149). Bauman's form of metaphors allows us to look at human experience through a completely unconstrained vantage point. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are perceived as meteorological scalpels that dissected the social reality of a specific locality, New Orleans, and exposed deeply rooted social phenomena that were previously hidden away from view.

The use of 'surrealism' as a metaphor to capture the essence of the events that transpired was by no means accidental. "Ideas can accomplish absolutely nothing. To become real, ideas require men who apply a practical force," (Bauman, 1973, p. 167). In light of the unusual circumstances of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the events that followed, proceeding with a

conventional approach to a literature review or theory does not adequately capture the events' essence. Traditional educational or philosophical terminology does not suffice when attempting to illustrate the events that transpired. However, the description organically emerged from the evacuees' themselves, who described their experience and their reaction to it as 'surreal.' It only seemed natural that I would use their words and their accounts as a guide for my research.

You hear the word "surreal" in every report from this city now. There is no better word for it. If Salvador Dali showed up here, he wouldn't be able to make heads or tails of it. Nobody could paint this. He did that famous painting of the melting clock, and our clocks melted at 6:45 the morning of August 29. That what the clocks in the French Quarter still say. That's when time stood still, (Rose, 2007, p. 16).

Understandably surrealism is not a common feature in educational research. Equally, disaster response does not resemble anything that appears to be normal. As former LSU Chancellor, Sean O'Keefe, said, "the red tape that often slows large government agencies was cut at LSU, and the unspoken motto was "get it done,"" (Bacher et al., 2005, p. xiii). Further, disaster response can neither be perceived nor addressed in any conventional manner, but only with a general lens to address human needs. Anything further demands craftier, while contextually relevant, thought. Finding solutions became an exploration of interdisciplinary means in most unexpected places. Just as we'll see in this chapter, metaphors were used as a primary mechanism to extraordinary discoveries in the surrealist movement.

It is important to note that surrealism was not only an art movement contrary to popular culture, but also a social, philosophical, and literary movement as well as a way of life. As mentioned in the first chapter, Apollinaire coined the word 'surrealism' in his work called *Calligrammes* in 1918, (Bohn, 2002; Rosemont, 1978). However, it was André Breton who adopted the concept and furthered its importance in the literary world before it even became a genre. Breton held Apollinaire and his poetics in highest regard. After Apollinaire's death, as

homage, Breton adopted 'surrealism' as the main guide to portray both their fascination with imagination and its potential (Bohn, 2002). Even today many still write using the techniques developed by Andre Breton and his followers. For example, Roberston's poetry largely consists of literary tools from the surrealist era and in particular, bricolage.

We converse silently with locutions of starlight in the vibrant inner darkness, to wit my own cryptic: "The brutal angles of eternity," then her worshipful: "The holy voice serenely singing," followed by my mournful: "An anti-intellectual randori of sorts," met by her hopeful: "The divine as expressed through these individualities," and so on, directing our remarks inaudibly upstream together toward the source in a lyrically spiritual syntax that one cannot translate very well into our pragmatically articulated language, reverently toward the sacred void together that is the urge of the cosmos and the origin of all creation, until our Rottweiler telepathically reminded us: "Do not forget the dog," which is always sound advice and in this case leads us like Zhuangzi's sage to lean at our ease on the sun and moon and stars, to tuck the entire universe under an arm, to merge ourselves with the myriad separate things and the fecund emptiness containing them, and to accept the world's muddle just as it is (Roberston, 2007, p. 18).

The first official definition of 'surrealism' as a movement and its complexities can be found in Breton's First Surrealism Manifesto:

Surrealism, n., masculine. Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.
Encyclopedia. Philos. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected, in the omnipotence of the dream, and in the disinterested play of thought. It leads to the permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to its substitution for them in the solution of the principal problems of life (1924/1972, p. 26).

To better understand the scope of these definitions, it is necessary to look at the historical influences that helped bring these conceptions to life.

History of Surrealist Becoming

The two main schools of thought and art movements that are predominantly responsible for the emergences of surrealism are Dada and Cubism. The latter is more commonly known, and the former is largely dismissed due to its ephemeral, yet significant existence. Both existed during similar timeframes, and many of the artists have met, shared exhibition spaces, or exchanged ideas at some point (Bohn, 2002; Carrouges, 1974). Yet, each of these movements had their own specific influence on the emergence of surrealism. As such, they should be examined briefly and independently of each other.

Just Say ‘No’ in Dada’s Name

The beginning of the 20th century was a time of universalizing histories, the development of Freud’s concepts of the unconscious and his theories on dreams, engineering advancements marked by the Titanic, Einstein’s theory of relativity, the development of X-rays, and the beginnings of a film industry that included Charlie Chaplin. It was also the time of the First World War. In particular, it struck many as the fall of all civilization and the end of what it meant to be ‘civilized’. Such sentiments led many to revolt against their governments and their traditions. Many artists, writers, and poets fled to neutral Switzerland to seek refuge from the atrocities around them (Tythacott, 2003). Many were disgusted with what they were witnessing, and a sense of revolt trespassed into every aspect of their lives. Building upon those emotions ultimately gave rise to the Dada movement. Promulgated mainly by poets and artists – Tristan Tzara, de Zayas, and Picardia in particular – Dadaism was born out of anger and a need for revolt.

Dadaism officially existed as a movement between 1916-1921; its premises revolved around opposition to the standards in every field (Carrouges, 1974). It was a movement that played on elements of anarchy to portray displeasure with complacency and conventions.

“Determined to invent their own reality, the Dadaists insisted on wiping the slate clean so they could start from scratch. Having reduced artistic expression to its barest essentials—color and line—they began to experiment with brand new forms,” (Bohn, 2002, p. 29). Further, they looked at bourgeois forms of conduct and deliberately “subverted, parodied; intuition and freedom of expression flourished,” (Tythacott, 2003, p. 20). However, their activities were conducted at random and lacked cohesion. The Dada movement reached its apex in 1919, but soon dissolved in 1921 due to internal conflicts and rival struggles (Carrouges, 1974). This is not surprising since the basis of this movement was a strict opposition of any position. It was only natural that self-contradiction would eventually cause an implosion. It was a fertile moment for Breton to step in.

Animated by the spirit of revolt of the dadaist movement, to which most of them had belonged originally, the surrealists reacted violently against its nihilism, its absurdity and blindness. They were in fact looking for what we must call, even from their point of view, a way of salvation. They thought they had found it in those vital moments in which a man is raised above himself and ordinary life; that is, in instants of ecstasy and of illumination, (Carrouges, 1974, p. 6).

In his *First Manifesto* (1924), Breton described the emergence of surrealism as “the rise of the phoenix,” in reference to the rise from disillusionment with Dada (Bohn, 2002). Breton, Apollinaire, Duchasse, Duchamps and others used the basis of Dadaism, its intentions, anti-conventionality, and understanding of an ‘object’, and introduced poetic conduits to the consciousness.

Cubism and Its Dimensionality

Another movement that greatly contributed to the conception of surrealism was Cubism (Bohn, 2002; Carrouges, 1974; Cowling, 1985), in particular the idea of the fourth dimension and how it is represented in art. “Although the fourth dimension served primarily as a metaphor initially, the Surrealists conceived of it as an actual domain—that of the Freudian unconscious—

whose boundaries could be determined via certain procedures,” (Bohn, 2002, p. 2). This dimension ascribes the interaction of time and space with the other three dimensions of physical reality (Bohn, 2002). In the experimentation with such planes of existence, artists like Picasso, di Chirico, and Braque were able to explore an object through multiple views from different angles at the same time. In other words, every painting was meant to represent an object in constant movement in a particular time period.

The relationship between Cubists and Surrealists was tenuous throughout connected times (Cowling, 1985). Surrealists used the ideas of pliability of materials and their meanings along with temporal situatedness in their work to render even the most mundane objects as timeless (Carrouges, 1974). However, Cubism lacked the philosophical underpinnings that Surrealists were looking for and its influence was relegated to art mediums. By the 1930s, Breton expelled most of his connections with the Cubists, making the accusation that they had become more interested in selling their paintings and falsely ascribing leading roles in surrealism (Cowling, 1985) while declaring nationalism to their particular country of origin. Both tenets went against the ideology of surrealism. Breton no longer recognized even those like Picasso, though an admiration for his work and contributions were generally acknowledged in both Manifestoes and pamphlets. However, the internal conflicts and expulsion trials are not relevant here. Therefore, I will divert the conversation to where it is most significant for our discussion on post-disaster education programming and why elements of surrealism are important to consider.

Surrealism’s Essence

It is important to emphasize the importance of historical context that gave rise to emotions of revolt and disgust with the geopolitical landscape (Levi-Strauss, 1985). They refused to engage in Nietzsche’s nihilism that pervaded throughout the Dada movement, simply because

it did not leave one with hope or any resolution to the issues at hand (Carrouges, 1974).

According to Breton, “it [surrealism] expresses—and always has expressed for us—a desire to deepen the foundations of the real, to bring about an even clearer and, at the same time, ever more passionate consciousness of the world perceived by the senses” (1934). The goal for Breton was to find a resolution between oppositions: life and death, real and imagined, mind and body, self and other, communicable and noncommunicable, conscious and unconscious (Bohn, 2002; Carrouges, 1974; Caws, 1997; Rosemont, 1978; Tythacott, 2003).

Consistent with the movement’s eclectic origins, they experienced no difficulty in combining Freud with the alchemist Fulcanelli and Eros with Karl Marx. Their goal was to transform the process of seeing, thinking, and feeling in order to arrive at complete liberation. Ultimately, Surrealism attempted to effect a total revolution in the way we perceive the universe and ourselves, (Bohn, 2002, p. 213).

Freud was a particularly vital figure for surrealists. His psychoanalytic theory on unconscious dreams and desires greatly contributed to explaining the various levels of the subconscious and their dichotomies. Such border crossing allowed for many, what seemed, dichotomous associations to be made between elements appearing in the world as representations of subconscious thought. One of the most effective modes of traversing was through art (Mundy, 1987; Tythacott, 2003). In fact, Freud considered art as the sole repository of omniscient thought and marveled at its powers.

Only in art does it still happen that a man who is consumed by desires performs something resembling the accomplishment of those desires and that what he does in play produces emotional effect—thanks to artistic illusion—just as though it were something real. People speak with justice of the “magic of art” and compare artists to magicians, (Freud in Totem and Taboo 1962, p. 90, in Schechner, 1993, p. 306).

Further, his psychoanalytical theory attributed the unconscious as the area removed from the world of reason, thus making it the ultimate source for creativity. Breton and other Surrealists considered this element key and strove to tap into that reservoir through hypnosis at first, then

later developing their “own technique of ‘free association’ as the key for unlocking the unconscious and unraveling the mystery of dreams” (Tythacott, 2003, p. 52). This technique involved automatic writing, automatic speech, and constant analysis of dreams (Bohn, 2002; Mundy, 1987); rather than writing the first things that came to mind. Automatic writing involved prolonged sessions almost in a trance in efforts to reach the gates of the unconscious and let it be expressed in the form of poetics (Rosemont, 1978). *Les Champs Magnétiques* was officially the first product of automatic writing done by Breton and Duchamps. For Breton, “the process of writing itself tended to evoke a visual *gestalt*,” (Carrouges, 1974, p. 142). Hence, surrealists refused to distinguish poetry and art as separate.

Not only did the Surrealists manipulate words as if they were objects, therefore, but they manipulated objects as if they were words. On the one hand, they were fascinated by language’s ability to transcend itself, to communicate what was essentially uncommunicable. On the other, they were obsessed with the image’s ability to transcend physical reality, to portray what was essentially unimaginable, (Bohn, 2002, p. 142).

The visuals from dreams were a particular fascination for Surrealists. Gaining a visual of an object from the unconsciousness and translating it into poetic or art form became the main goal (Schechner, 1993). However, where Freud’s discussion on dreams and actions searched to understand the disjunction between them, Surrealism sought to dismantle those barriers and make them one (Rosemont, 1978). In that effort, they developed a completely new definition of aesthetic and what elements help create it.

Surrealist Art Essentials and Aesthetics

One of the first impressions that one gets when looking at Surrealist work is its complete opposition to previous tenets of art aesthetics. In fact, the goal of Surrealism was to disturb our sense of normal, (Bohn, 2002; Breton, 1924; Carrouges, 1974; Tythacott, 2003). Given the social and political influences of the time and their disastrous consequences, turning their backs on any

bourgeois notions was especially motivating for Surrealists. “Within Surrealism, aesthetics and politics were fused, the visual and contextual collided. Surrealist aesthetic philosophy attempted to level art historical hierarchies and to explore the social context and the politics of production in art” (Tythacott, 2003, p. 11). Political critique of modern society became in itself a standard.

According to Surrealists, the Renaissance period marked the beginning of the demise of modern society. The concept of colonization and positivism contributed to the bourgeois conventions on aesthetics and were considered hegemonic to the true intent of human existence, creativity, and its development of knowledge. The only elements that were found to be ‘aesthetically beautiful’ to the Surrealists, were ‘exotic’ non-European objects, also known to the bourgeois as the ‘primitive’. “By deliberately realigning *different* cultural realities, adherents [Surrealists] believed they could bring into question the very nature of their own European reality,” (Tythacott, 2003, p. 2). The *different* corresponded to what was, preferably, untainted by Western influences. “Primitive objects, so exquisitely different from other European art forms of their time, qualified for the surreal category of the marvelous,” (Tythacott, 2003, p. 69). The constant search for the ‘exotic’ and the ‘marvelous’ was one of the main goals in Bretonian Surrealism.

When searching for the ‘marvelous’, one did not pursue with the intent to find it. Instead, one relied on chance encounters (Bohn, 2002; Carrouges, 1974). When walking through flea markets and antique shops, they were struck by the magical simplicity of African, South American, and Oceanic art works. These pieces inspired many Surrealists to go visit many of these places, except Oceania. Breton made several trips to Mexico and Haiti where he encountered those practicing the powers of Voodoo. Such trips and encounters made the Surrealists more appreciative of the ‘primitive’ and its power to see each ‘through the other’

(Caws, 1997, p.14). Objects were believed to possess various identities, not only the ones that are seen in physical reality. Interestingly enough, Surrealists believed that even at the level of physical reality, there existed objects and things that manifested the Surrealist nature such as owl's head butterflies, any stick insect, the praying mantis, etc. (Tythacott, 2003). Each played a specific role in nature, the same as each element played a specific part in art.

The Role of the Surrealist 'Object'

Considering the eternal exploration for these specific objects and their identities, the next step was to translate accordingly their 'unconscious' nature onto canvas. "Within Surrealism the art object is but a window, a springboard, a gateway, a rope of knotted sheets leading to this beyond, for which the world of dreams, or life beyond the looking glass, were convenient literary metaphors," (Mundy, 1987, p. 496). The chosen objects possess characteristics of transformation and of poetic change and are used for these specific reasons. As previously stated, Surrealist paintings as a whole are there to perturb the audience, and the elements within are to evoke a sense of expectation and desire to find out the secrets they hold within. Their role is to be seen as windows into the objective reality that the audience can interpret (Carrouges, 1974; Mundy, 1987). The techniques used to create these windows also played a significant role in setting the stage for interpretation.

Techniques

Apart from automatic writing there were four other main techniques that were developed to constitute a Surrealist oeuvre: automatic drawing, cadavres exquis, frottage, and collage (Bohn, 2002; Carrouges, 1974; Tythacott, 2003). The first visual form of automatic drawing, similar to automatic writing, helps to bring the images generated by the unconscious onto canvas.

As such, the natures of objects do not adhere to their original physical reality. For that reason, Dali's clocks are drooping and the elephants' reflections in the water are swans.

Another famous technique was the *cadavres exquis*. It was one of many Surrealist games developed by Breton, Duchamp, and others. This one involved "passing blank pieces of paper around a group. The resulting work – a communal creation – is an amalgam of imaginations that inevitably depicts a hybridized, multi-layered body" (Tythacott, 2003, p. 31). The artists believed that communal painting held particularly superior placement of value since the melding of the subconscious and unconscious aspect of many extended the realm of creative possibilities. In effect, bringing multiple voices and perceptions was the only way to truly gain creative truth.

Frottage technique was first developed by Max Ernst who apparently gained a mental image of multilayered textures yet was unable to translate them onto canvas. Then one day, while looking at his wooden floors, he noticed particular grain patterns emerging from its fibers. He then proceeded to trace over the wood onto paper. "Coining the term 'frottage' – literally 'rubblings' – he [Ernst] developed from this a 'new' Surrealist process of metamorphosis. Frottage involves rubbing a textured surface with a pencil," (Tythacott, 2003, p. 30). The technique is widely used now, especially in tracing over leaves and their vein structures.

The last technique is the most common of all and the most used by Surrealists – collage. The disjunctive and seemingly disorienting power of collage was what drove the Surrealists to use this technique so prevalently (Carrouges, 1974). The objects and elements used were considered the debris of mass production. The elements came from "newspapers, photographs, glossy images from magazines, sweet papers, bus tickets, fabric, metal, adverts and other types of ready-made imagery were cut-out, dislocated from the original milieu and placed afresh next to other, distinct forms and shapes," (Tythacott, 2003, p. 30). The idea was to collect and

juxtapose incongruous artifacts with the “idea that ‘the real’ lies beyond what may be seen,” (Mundy, 1987, p. 497). Such juxtapositions gave new meanings to the overall result and new interpretive lenses (Carrouges, 1974). One of the most favored examples of literary collages was written by Comte Lautréamont, where he described beauty as ‘a chance encounter on a dissecting table of an umbrella and a sewing machine’ (Cowling, 1978). There are several offshoots of this technique, including montages, photomontages, and bricolage. The last mode, bricolage, is the one most pertinent to our discussion.

With this technique, the artists used whatever was readily available to replicate the mental image, rather than explore for the exact representation. It served as a faster way to translate the image before allowing it to subside back into the unconscious. With that in mind, it is easy to see how this can be applied to areas other than art. In fact, the person who brought our attention to ‘bricolage’ was Claude Levi-Strauss.

Bricolage/Bricoleur

In the 1940s, Breton and several other Surrealists went into exile due to yet another set of atrocities of war, and went to New York. During this period, Breton spent a lot of time with American artists and writers on the Lower East Side. One of them was Claude Levi-Strauss (Bohn, 2002; Caws, 1997; Mundy, 1987; Tythacott, 2003). Not only was Levi-Strauss fascinated with the Surrealist initiation rituals, group rites and games; he was particularly struck by the idea of juxtaposition of various images and collages (Tythacott, 2003). With his own interest in Freudian psychoanalytical theories, he too sought to better understand the unconscious and how it contributed to the ideas of myth, dualities and binaries occurring in nature. Further, Levi-Strauss too refused to treat Western aesthetic values as superior, making him more appreciative of the Surrealist concept of ‘primitive’ (Levi-Strauss, 1985; Tythacott, 2003). As an

anthropologist, he sought to understand different cultures and he too traveled to Brazil in South America. His theories on myth and how individuals make cultural sense of their surroundings stemmed from these travels and helped in developing a concept of bricoleur and bricolage in anthropology.

According to Levi-Strauss, a ‘bricoleur’ is someone who works with his hands and uses readily available materials and tools to complete a project.

The ‘bricoleur’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to many particular projects, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions, (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 17).

Though there is no English equivalent term. A ‘bricoleur’ is someone who engages in bricolage, which comes from the French ‘bricoler’, which in turn means ‘fiddling with and/or Jack of all trade’ (Merriam-Webster, 2010). In other words, a ‘bricoleur’ is a Jack of all trades who uses tools and materials for a particular project that are found in his immediate environment that may/may not belong to the project (Kincheloe, 2001). He or she, acting as a bricoleur, collects objects that could be used by various professions without having the full knowledge of the trade (Kincheloe, 2001; Levi-Strauss, 1963). That is not to say that a bricoleur improvises the usage of objects; on the contrary, he or she has an understanding of each object’s multifaceted potential for usage. With each new task, a bricoleur does a retrospective analysis on the objects’ past uses, considers new ones, categorizes where they would be best applied, or extends the potentiality of the existing materials (Levi-Strauss, 1963). Additionally, the bricoleur operates on the basis of signs. “Signs allow and even require the interposing and incorporation of a certain amount of

human culture into reality” (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 20). Such signs serve as permutable guidelines for human behavior.

Further, the bricoleur understands that his or her work is never done since circumstances constantly change. There is a constant need for new adjustments to be made. “Given an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities, the ‘bricoleur’ may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself into it,” (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p. 21). In other words, any task in progress or completed by a bricoleur bears his or her mark, or authorship if you will. Since the idea of bricolage is to culturally make sense of the world, it is only natural that each bricoleur possess his/her own interpretational lens while fitting into a communal understanding.

In recent years, the idea of bricolage and the bricoleur’s potential has been increasingly recognized in other fields. In education, the “bricoleur works in the real world of learning, uses a variety of research tools and methods in creative, adaptive ways; draws from many rather than one discipline, and focuses on solving a problem rather than testing a theory” (Fleener et al., 2005, p. 13). The distinctive post-Katrina and Rita circumstances demanded the LSU College of Education pull together its resources such as faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, community partners, and inter-university connections to address the immediate needs. In those circumstances, it was mainly the “central feature to be pragmatic flexibility—the use of multiple ideas, perspectives, and methods, with none privileged and none ruled out. They see these diverse materials as being pieced together to produce an emergent construction” (Hammersley, 1999, p. 576). In that, many usual ways of attaining materials for programming was disturbed or completely destroyed, it was necessary to work with anything readily available, thus embodying

the spirit of a bricoleur. Furthermore, since bricolage was used to make sense of the world in form of myth, it only seems fitting that we do the same.

Framing the Myth of Katrina

According to Dictionary.com 'myth' is defined as:

A traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation, especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and explains some practice, rite, or phenomenon of nature (n.d.).

In this case, the event of Katrina was described as 'surreal,' providing a fantastical aura to the natural phenomenon. For those outside of Louisiana, Katrina happened long ago and has become part of distant memory. It can be found in history books in the form of a short paragraph added to a contemporary history chapter with additional web links on publishers' websites (MacGraw-Hill, n.d.). Over a certain period of time many events and stories are turned into historical recounts or plain stories, even myths, as though saying: 'a long, long time ago, Katrina set the stage for the destruction of New Orleans assisted by human efforts to tame a feral river and the climate surrounding it.' Such attitude first manifested itself with 'Katrina fatigue' (Brazile, November 20, 2005), where those not affected by the storm lost interest in recovery efforts as well as the tragic stories related by evacuees and their families. It was at that moment that myths first emerged.

According to the Surrealists, each individual is a generator of myth. Each person is an individual myth-creator, and one of the goals of Surrealism is to create a collective myth (Breton, 1924; Levi-Strauss, 1985). Since the purpose of a myth is to project and interpret (Bauman, 1973; Carrouges, 1974), it is fitting to use this concept to attempt to understand the events that transpired following Katrina and Rita. "Levi-Strauss treats myth as bricolage par excellence, as an attempt to make sense of the world as a whole by blending together whatever is available into

a complete story,” (Hammersley, 1999, p. 575). Further, Surrealists considered each individual artwork a harbinger of a psychic story, a myth of sorts (Breton, 1924). Each artwork possessed its own power to contribute to the communal myth. Historically, people used elements of culture, history, and context to help comprehend whatever the world blew their way. All of which contributes to the assertion that, “all cultures are mythological; myths are good to think with, or at least some myths are enabling while others are disabling” (Beilharz, 2007, p. 17). Here, looking through a Surrealist lens, we’re creating a bricolage, an art piece, with the elements that Katrina and Rita left behind; thus helping in the construction of the Myth of Katrina in understanding what indeed took place.

Since according to Geertz (1973), men are cultural artifacts, I am going to include several individuals who lived in Renaissance Village immediately following the hurricanes, those that participated in response to the crisis, and LSU students to represent the myth of Katrina. Additionally, the educational landscape created at Renaissance Village was unique in its nature, the origins of its creation fully representative of the bricoleur’s potential in a post-disaster context. The creation of a new educational program with almost no materials or place to properly conduct activities in the beginning and then surviving for over three years clearly indicates that some things were working. Both hurricanes disturbed the lives of the New Orleans population, crossing social boundaries and exposing vulnerabilities while bringing the country’s unconscious to the forefront. Only the Surrealist movement allows for all these elements to emerge with such malleability.

Conclusion, but Really the Beginning

“Now, Breton was clever but he should not be given all the posies, for New Orleans has been turning its whole population into surrealists for a century,” (Starr, 1998, p. 89). Similar to

misconceptions of New Orleans and its people, there are plenty of misconceptions about surrealism as atheist, Marxist, and fascist. Yes, the main premise of Surrealism is to perturb and cause problems (Caws, 1997). At its very core surrealism was about revolt, a refusal to accept current conditions as the only reality. It was also a quest in search of a way to transcend social, political, and cultural realities. In fact, its main goal was for it to permeate through life. It was a philosophy of life (Breton, 1924). Surrealism considered itself “above all science of the imagination, not at all theoretical, but concrete; not passive, but dynamic,” (Carrouges, 1974, p. 228).

The following table clarifies the development of art movements over time and how each influenced the ones that followed.

Table 1. Major Art Movements, Figures, and Definitions

Movement	Major Figures	Definition
Expressionism (1900-1920)	Edvard Munch, Marc Chagall	Expressionism was an artistic style where an artist depicts reality through his or her emotional reactions to objects and events. The main techniques included distortions, exaggerations, and primitivism
Cubism (1907-1914)	Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque	Art movement where objects and persons were fragmented into three-dimensional subjects and viewed from multiple perspectives simultaneously.
Dada (1916-1921)	Marcel Duchamps, Max Ernst	Art movement characterized by anarchic revolt against complacency and conventions. Dada reveled in absurdity and all forms of contradictions existing on the same plane (Carrouges, 1974).
Surrealism (1924-1940)	Marcel Duchamps, Rene Margritte, Joan Miro, Salvador Dali	Art and literary movement that emphasized the power of the subconscious once it has been freed from the oppressions of reason and convention. It became the primary source for inspiration and expression. (Tythacott, 2003).

Similarly, culture adheres to the dynamic nature, constantly evolving and adapting to new circumstances, hence becoming a perfect metaphor for my research. Many individuals who went through the ordeal of Katrina and Rita were perturbed by what the hurricanes caused, and how

the government responded. The ‘social unconscious’, as I call it, rose to the surface and was exposed as levels of poverty, racism, and a dismal educational landscape became apparent. Those elements were previously hidden from national view. Only those who either lived near or researched those fields knew of their existence. The flood caused by the failure of the levees helped wash away the layers that covered the truth. The nation was shocked.

The emotional reactions of individuals, groups, and the nation perfectly corresponded to that of the Surrealist art movement. Shock, awe, and even revolt against FEMA’s treatment of evacuees all played a role in developing a desire to transcend the current state and strive for something better. Those types of sentiments were captured as the backdrop of the Renaissance Village painting and Delta Express within it. In fact, RV was unique in its structure, size and in what transpired within its fenced grounds.

Proceeding in a formalized manner did not seem appropriate considering that the basic concept of Surrealism was the pure disregard of traditional boundaries and then replacing them with new ones that were widely porous between conscious and the unconscious. We worked in the largest FEMA trailer park in Louisiana with the ‘social unconscious’, traumatized population, governmental impediments, and an extreme need to engage students. It was also an opportunity – an opportunity for innovation. Corresponding with Surrealism, a new venue was needed. Surrealism rejects concepts such as “art for art’s sake” (Rosemont, 1978, p. 3). We did not want to educate for education’s sake. It was a fertile moment for innovation to breach conventions under circumstances.

Chapter 4: Portraiture Method to Study Individual Disasters

Drawing is drawing *out*; it is extraction of what the subject matter has to say in particular to the painter in his integrated experience. Because the painting is a unity of interrelated parts, every designation of a particular figure has, more over, to be drawn *into* a relation of mutual reinforcement with all other plastic means—color, light, the spatial planes and the placing of other parts,

- Dewey, J. 1934, p. 96.

Each post-disaster locale is unique, differing in geographical location, impacted populations, cultural complexities, and temporal lengths. Therefore, each situation needs to be studied and analyzed as individual and distinct case studies. Similarly, artists' paintings may be classified within a genre, yet are distinct from one work of art, or oeuvre, to the next. Artists view their subjects in a particularly complex way at any particular time. It is impossible for an artist to see their subject the same way twice since they bring forth contextual elements at that particular timeframe to construct a representation, or interpretation, of reality and their subconscious perceptions. Artists acknowledge the fluidity of human nature and social environs (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001). For that reason, case study research design seems a perfect fit for my research design for it captures that fluidity and artistic dynamic in a form that I will call 'case study tableau.'

Stake (1995) suggests several roles that a researcher can assume when conducting case study research, among them is the role of an Interpreter. He purports that, "research is not just the domain of scientists, it is the domain of craftsperson's and artists as well," (p. 97). By looking at René Magritte and his work, Stake was able to build a case study focused on how an artist interprets the realities around him, how they translate onto canvas, as well as how his interpretations translate into the way an audience understands his work. Seeing a researcher as an artist with an assumed role of Interpreter allows for the researcher to serve a new role as an

“agent of new interpretation,” (Stake, p. 99) bringing to light “juxtaposition of the unrelated to juxtaposition of associates,” (Stake, p. 99). The circumstances surrounding the complex nature of RV, its residents, FEMA, and other existing elements seem rather disjointed if trying to look at these entities separately, and especially when trying to see educational efforts in that milieu. However, with an assumed role of an artist and interpreter, I attempted to paint an oeuvre, or work of art, to try to understand and make sense of what transpired via embedded case study design.

The purpose of this embedded case study (Yin, 2008) was to paint a surrealist case study tableau depicting the extent of cultural responsiveness of DEP at RV. These different cultural pieces served as my units of analysis. Though they may be distinct at first glance, they fit into a bigger context contributing to a more detailed portrait that was the reality of RV. By examining several different participants and sources at a single site, the study sought to identify commonalities and relationships that would otherwise be undetected if another form of design had been chosen. In an effort to use the metaphor of surrealism, I propose analyzing the program as a case study tableau, using Lawrence-Lightfoot’s portraiture (1997) design and methodology.

This chapter contains four sections. The first section describes the design used. The second section describes the researcher’s role. Section three describes the participant selection. The last section describes data sources proposed for the collection of this proposed study and methods for analysis as well as ethical parameters.

Design

When first trying to determine the appropriateness of a design based on the questions I wanted to answer, I vacillated between several different options. In order to capture the ephemeral essence of RV and the residents’ circumstances, I elected to use qualitative

methodology. However, within this domain many differences research approaches exist, none of which resonated for what I wanted to pursue. I considered phenomenological and ethnographical approaches. Yet, in both instances, what I wanted to do would not fulfill all of their requirements. For example, in pure ethnography with an anthropological lens, living amongst participants or having full access to their lives is mandatory. FEMA security precluded this by simply not allowing outsiders to stay overnight in any of the trailers, though many times we were invited by families to stay overnight. Such measures were not unique to FEMA, other organizations that entered developed similarly stringent rules upon residents that limited opportunities for discussions or even private visits. Those were the moments that made me realize that this setting was distinct from all other disaster sites in how organizations and residents react and organize themselves. It solidified my choice of using case study design. According to Yin (2008), in such instances ‘how,’ ‘what,’ and ‘why’ questions are most appropriate for rendering the most insightful datum. Once I chose case study design, I needed to find a methodology that would equally capture the essence of this site.

In my search for scholars who pushed the boundaries of empirical research and acknowledge the fluidity of human experience, I returned to my initial field notes. I kept returning to one quote that stood out starkly from the very beginning, ‘This whole thing is surreal.’ Indeed, all of the events that followed seemed to construct a surreal picture in contemporary times. I began to look into art and aesthetic research methodologies. Initially, all I could find was literature on art education or aesthetics in art, until I finally returned to my course notes and reencountered Lawrence-Lightfoot’s concept of portraiture (1997).

Method

According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), portraiture draws from two research traditions wherein contexts are the foci of the human experience.

Portraiture is a method framed by the traditions and values of the phenomenological paradigm, sharing many of the techniques, standards, and goals of ethnography. But it pushes against the constraints of those traditions and practices in its effort to combine empirical and aesthetic description, in its focus on the convergence of narrative and analysis, in its goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the academy (thus linking inquiry to public discourse and social transformation), in its standard of authenticity rather than reliability and validity (the traditional standards of quantitative and qualitative inquiry), and in its explicit recognition of the use of the self as the primary research instrument for documenting and interpreting the perspectives and experiences of the people and the cultures being studied, (p. 13-14).

Portraiture seems to be the most appropriate method from which to analyze this study's data. In particular, while Katrina impacted education, it also touched many aspects of peoples' lives and thus, seems particularly suited to bringing issues of culturally responsive disaster response to those outside education and the academy. This method requires thorough descriptions of participants, interactions, reactions and context in order to project a sense of reality to the audience. Similarly, "an artistic relationship between color, light, and space in a portrait is not only more enjoyable than is an outline stencil, but it says more," (Dewey, 1934, p. 95). With that in mind, an extensive amount of description and creativity was necessary on my part. According to Geertz (1973) imagination is a crucial ingredient in the drawing of cultures, and it is rich description that allows those on the outside to understand living on the inside of a culture. Geertz links imagination and interpretation in his depiction of what he calls "thick description," (p. 214). Though imagination could be interpreted as a form of fictitious narrative, to me, this spark of creativity is essential in capturing the essence of lived experiences and their contexts.

With that in mind, individual perspectives on the participants set distinct barriers, constraints, and borders (Geertz, 1973; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Shirley, 2005). For that reason, I propose to follow Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) model that differentiates between four different forms of context: internal context, historical context, aesthetic features, and personal context. All these forms are necessary to ensure all differences are acknowledged and included in each unit of analysis while creating the tableau. Consequently, this model parallels Yin's embedded case study design.

Internal Context

The internal context refers to the physical setting or rather the ecological surroundings (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In order to understand the circumstances of RV's residents, it is necessary to place RV in a contextual macrosphere. Its uniqueness stems from its placement in Baker, Louisiana, on a national scale, and finally, within the international arena.

Historical Context

According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, the historical context refers to the depictions of history, culture and ideology of a particular site. "The portraitist should always be alert to the convergence (and contrast) between the external signs of the physical environment and the interior culture, noting the synchrony and the dissonance," (1997, p. 52). This includes description of institutional culture and history. In this case, it warranted not only a description of RV's overall culture and its historical evolution, but also how DEP fit into that dynamic along with its own metamorphosis over the three and a half years of its existence. New Orleans' people share a very rich history full of colonial disputes. However, displacing them in a rural cow pasture and expecting them to succeed in rebuilding their lives seemed a little more complex to comprehend and more nuanced in its creation.

Aesthetic Context

This particular form of context requires more literary tools to be applied to truly capture the spirit of portraiture and the art within the research. By bringing in the metaphor of surrealism, my goal was to expose overarching themes and nuanced elements that normally could be missed if a different methodology were used. According to Bauman (1998), metaphors are a perfect mode for imagination to find its place in any literary piece when all other forms have fallen short in capturing the essence of what the author wants the readers to understand. Further, Geertz (1973) points out that metaphors allow for better visualization of complex cultural and historical phenomena while at the same time helping the narrator, me, organize material and ensure its cohesion, as explicated in Chapter 3. With that in mind, the idea of a **portrait** and its organization needs further discussion.

The outer edges of the canvas on which the artist paints physically and psychologically frame an aesthetic space that is separate from the world at large. What occurs within the parameters of that frame is set off from everyday reality and evokes a response that is different from the response evoked by objects and events in the everyday world. Within the boundaries that frame the aesthetic space, the artist seeks to achieve a visual order through the interrelationship of elements of the composition around the center of the work (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 33).

Here, the aesthetic context allows for many units of analysis to coexist. Yet, each unit of analysis was added to the RV tableau while bearing in mind their own unique structures and, often times, porous boundaries and outlines. In this embedded case study tableau, I narrowed down the focal point of the study, starting with the outer edges, which consisted of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita themselves. It was important to begin with how their presence alerted the local population and the official government, along with how the general population reacted. As mentioned before, hurricane parties were common sights during such events and attitudes varied as to what the appropriate response should be.

Next, I described the evacuation processes and development of FEMA trailer parks around the Baton Rouge area. Close to seven months passed before government trailer parks were established in the greater New Orleans area (Martel, 2006). For many months, Baton Rouge served as the primary destination for FEMA housing. Then, I narrowed perceptions to the LSU COE's entry into RV and the inception of the work COE performed there. Though I wish I could describe the entire realm of the events that took place, I recognize the need to narrow the research topic and focus on providing a thorough portrayal of what happened only in RV and the DEP program.

The recruitment of LSU volunteer students was vital in the first few months of COE's presence there. Consider that the majority of these LSU student volunteers were from greater New Orleans or surrounding areas, had been impacted by the hurricanes and the resulting devastation, and that many expressed an 'intrinsic' need to help in this situation. Also, LSU was very lenient for those students who volunteered at that time, making it easier for emergent programs such as DEP to determine what was needed and expand the capacity of our help.

Personal Context of Researcher's Role

The personal context refers to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' perception of the researcher's role (1997). As mentioned in Chapter 1, I arrived two weeks prior to the landing of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. My role could be equivocated to that of DEP in that there was a truly emergent essence to it that constantly needed to adapt and to survive. It was not unlike Stake's role of the Interpreter, one who sought to make sense of what was taking place around me. "The researcher is the stranger, the one who must experience the newness, the awkwardness, the tentativeness that comes with approaching something unfamiliar, and must use the actors in the setting as guides, as authorities, as knowledge bearers," (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997,

p. 43). Thus, I was a stranger in many ways; to Louisiana, to Baton Rouge, to the experience of the devastation of hurricanes, to LSU COE, and to RV. From the very beginning, LSU COE entered the RV premises with the understanding that COE volunteers were not experts in what was taking place there, and that volunteers from COE needed help in trying to situate ourselves and our program in this new environment.

I entered the premises as a graduate assistant who knew very little about New Orleans, Louisiana, the United States, and its people, and who was in a slightly better position than that of those affected. I, too, only had a few of my belongings with me and found myself in completely different circumstances than what I expected, but I was fortunate enough to have an apartment in Baton Rouge and no need for government assistance. In the next couple of days my role shifted from site coordinator, to recruiter of volunteers, then to program developer and teaching assistant, and finally to grant manager. My perception of various individuals at the site was that they viewed me through various lenses. The FEMA workers saw me and my colleagues as local institutional imposters—wielders of the hegemonic power that many universities carry. The security guards who were hired by FEMA saw us as an unwanted presence attempting to justify our role there like many other service-providers, and who would require additional supervision from them. Other service-providers, such as Big Buddy, saw us as competition for program participants. It seemed the residents viewed us as just another service-provider who came with predetermined program or resources that were assumed as needed. Finally, the children at RV seemed to perceive us as a welcome distraction because we were closer to their age, did not wear a uniform, and we had markers and crayons. Through this forest of perceptions, we had to convince all parties of LSU COE's legitimacy and good intentions, as well as build relationships and trust.

As a result of these myriad positions and perceptions of me as researcher, I determined that portraiture was the only methodology that would allow me to capture all of these nuances and obstacles. “Working in context, the researcher, then, has to be alert to surprises and inconsistencies and improvise conceptual and methodological responses that match the reality she is observing. The researcher’s stance becomes a dance of vigilance and improvisation,” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 43). Rather than considering the change of expected results as statistical anomalies or excluding these elements from the data, portraiture demands authenticity, capturing the essence of human experience that was described in detail within its particular context. Understanding the context is paramount. I found that portraiture is perhaps the only methodology that emphasizes context as the main descriptive force that helps guide the study, capture the essence human experience, and includes me, as the researcher, in the middle of the story. As Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) insist, “portraiture admits the central and creative role for the self of the portraitist” (p. 13). Further, “the self of the portraitist emerges as an instrument of inquiry, an eye on perspective-taking, an ear that discerns nuances, and a voice that speaks and offers insights” (p. 13). The active participation of the researcher in this methodology is one of the main reasons why I selected it. I helped develop DEP and how it adapted to all the aforementioned changes. Therefore, I had to find a research methodology that would include my presence rather than distance me from the research itself. Being at the forefront as a site, and then campus coordinator, and later as co-teacher, it also helped to determine participants when I was finally ready to write this oeuvre.

Data Collection

Five data sources were used in this proposed study. These sources include a reexamination of field note data collected for two previous studies, formal in-depth interviews

with four key informants, a review of student journals submitted for EDUC 2000 working with Children in Crisis, my personal journal maintained during DEP programming at RV, and artifacts from two previous studies.

Re-Examining Existing Data

This case study tableau is of a retrospective nature. During the existence of RV, several institutions attempted to gather data on a variety of topics. Luckily, I was able to participate in two studies from LSU during the three and a half year course of our program where I was a Co-PI on both. These studies were sponsored by and made possible through Higher Education Kentucky and Louisiana Campus Compact – Learn and Serve grants.

- Where are the Children?: Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children at the Renaissance Village
- Delta Express: Exploring Needs of Families.

These studies included gathering interviews, field-notes, and secondary data. Though these studies did not focus on cultural elements or on the metamorphosis of DEP, these elements emerged organically in the conversations. However, further re-analysis was required and added to the appropriate units of analysis. All of the participants from the previous two studies were informed about the purpose of this study. In the case of children, their parents or legal guardians signed the IRB office approved consent forms.

Follow-Up Formal Interviews

In addition to a re-examination of previously collected data, I attempted to conduct follow up interviews with four key informants. These informants, who were also participants, include a community member, a civilian volunteer, and two DEP site managers. Further interviews were conducted with four former students from LSU course EDUC 2000 Working

with Children in Crisis, who took the course the maximum number allowed (three times). Since they participated in the course the longest of all students, their perceptions of the activities taking place at RV provided valuable insight.

Re-Examination of LSU Volunteer Student Journals

Through EDUC 2000 I also acquired student volunteers' reflections and their journals from this course, which was affiliated with RV and DEP. These journals reflected the students' personal experiences with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as those experiences they encountered while working with RV children. I reviewed LSU student journals, also known as the diablogs, from EDUC 2000. These diablogs were a requirement for the course, but they registered the evolution of student perceptions and the program itself. Consent to use these journals comes from the two previously mentioned studies and resultant IRBs obtained.

Personal Reflective Journal

Further, I used and analyzed my personal reflective journal from my visits to the RV as a primary data source. The continuous observations made of children's behavioral progression and the building of trust by the community of the LSU institutional commitment to addressing mainly the educational needs, were used to help understand the unique setting and the circumstances surrounding that liminal population and to add depth to the findings. Also, LSU COE's constant presence allowed for registering any community reactions to the changes in policies and political decisions that directly affected the population of RV. These events were recorded in my personal journal.

Artifacts

In-depth collections of artifacts that represented post-disaster educative elements were conducted with guidance from former community members, as well as former service providers. This includes footage of children, pictures, and newspaper articles that depict significant Renaissance Village events. These sources of information were added to the overall embodiment of the residents' lifestyles, evidence of cultural displacement, and their daily struggles.

The following table presents the five distinct data sources I proposed for the purposes of this study. They involve both a re-examination of previously collected data as suggested by Wolf (1992), as well as data that I intended to collect and examine for both time frame and content themes.

Table 2. Data Sources and Timeframes of Analysis

Source	Data Collection and Analysis Time Frame
Data from Two Previous Studies	April, 2006—May, 2009
Formal, In-depth Interviews	June, 2011—December, 2011
Review of Student Journals	April, 2006—May, 2009
Personal Reflective Journal	April, 2006—May, 2009
Artifacts pertaining to DEP	April, 2006—May, 2009

Participant Selection

Purposeful and criterion sampling strategies were used throughout this study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that particular participants can provide the most relevant data to describe the events under study. Therefore, seeking particular informants was crucial. Furthermore, Patton (2001) discussed criterion-based sampling where potential study participants are selected based on predetermined criteria. Considering that the organization of this study follows a chronological development of DEP, particular individuals were chosen from each period of development. I intended to formally interview four participants who had in-depth knowledge of RV. The first was a community member affiliated with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), however,

she politely declined due to time constraints. Second was a particular civilian who was on a mission to save children with Math; unfortunately, he did not respond to my request. Finally, there were the initial DEP volunteers, specifically two site managers who were involved the longest with DEP and who experienced the most changes at the site.

Next, similar to the work of Margaret Wolf (1992), I reconsidered several existing interviews conducted on a pilot study of RV through two different studies, both related to Renaissance Village residents' perceptions on education and another dealing with FEMA closures and perceptions on post-disaster responses. I attempted to conduct several informal, follow-up interviews with previous attendees of the after-school program, their parents and adult group program participants. However, the majority of those participants have moved and could not be reached. Interview protocols are included in Appendix A.

I also conducted interviews with LSU students who had experienced the hurricanes in their own unique way and had worked with RV children the longest. They provided insight into how the program's culture evolved and morphed into a new set of cultural entities. Children connect better with those who are closer to their age, which is why LSU students were able to find out their stories a lot faster than many service providers. Interviews with both parties illuminated what was indeed an important factor in DEP's survival. Using Patton's criterion sampling (2001), I selected only those students who took the EDUC 2000 Working with Children in Crisis course maximum 3 times, a year and a half.

Further, a retrospective review of data from the School of Social Work and College of Education study and program was used here. Through this partnership Delta Express was able to expand its breadth to reach the RV adults, and then later establish Teen Fun Nights. RV was not built as a teen-friendly environment, where they could congregate and 'hang out'. In many cases,

teens would stay longer after their tutoring sessions were over and came to help us with our preparations for adult sessions. Recognizing the need, we developed Teen Fun Night in response. Consequently, we had teens help with adult sessions and adults help during the teen sessions. The dynamic that emerged was truly fascinating, and we only experienced dissonance when other service providers attempted to take over or interfere with the established organic order. This resource was vital in understanding elements that pertained to the maintenance of teen participation. There were several other programs that targeted teens. However, we were the only one that had steady involvement.

Another important source included previous service providers and organization members who were contacted for potential interviews. In particular, the Group Leader (GL) from City Group was asked to participate since she helped organize several programmatic events together with DEP and had similarly stayed as one of the last organizations at RV. City Group experienced many similar challenges with inter-service provider competitions. Their indirect workings with us had a large impact on our program as well as on the participants.

Analysis

Understanding the development of events and why Delta Express changed its tactics and modes of operation can only make sense first through chronological explanation and analysis. The fluidity of circumstances demanded we constantly adapt to new service providers, new FEMA rules, and to the fact that most of our participants constantly had to juggle all of these factors and us. Most programs required recording how many participants attended their activities, but in our case that was simply impossible. Though we did have many faithful attendees, FEMA was constantly encouraging people to move out of RV. Therefore, many individuals were constantly moving in and out of our program. The interviews, artifacts, and re-examination of

existing data were coded according to the particular time frame of DEP. Coding was done both according to a time frame of disaster response, as well as for content. Common themes that emerged within each data source once all time frames are discussed were then triangulated between each source.

With proper approvals from the Institutional Review Board, I re-examined the interviews from the “Where are the Children” study and conducted follow-up interviews to determine issues and perceptions of educational programs as part of post-disaster response. I analyzed all interview data and artifacts to determine commonalities. In case of uncertainty regarding terminology or description, I employed member check (Stake, 1995), where the researcher contacts the participants to clarify any misunderstandings and ensure the correctness of analysis.

Triangulation methodology was also used to ensure validity of findings since it provides a more consistent picture (Yin, 2008). Spending over three years in the field at RV allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics, but cross checking and conducting member check (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 2008) was necessary to ensure internal and external validity as mentioned by Cresswell. All of the data was analyzed through Lawrence-Lightfoot’s portraiture methodology involving thick description, which also allowed me to portray the internal struggle of conducting research during precarious times on a vulnerable population.

Ethics

While using the portraiture methodology, I also had to ponder what ethical issues I might encounter. One of the biggest concerns was the multitude of entities that I represented while working at RV. As an individual from LSU, graduate student, a foreigner from Poland, and an educator, I bore an extensive burden of ethics of representation (Mortensen & Kirsch, 1996).

Knowing that I was perceived as some or all elements made me greatly aware of the sense of responsibility that I had to the RV residents as not to impose any of these identities upon them when conducting this study and especially during the data analysis.

Further, Margaret Wolf cautioned against power differentials that could translate into the work that was done at RV due to the different facets of representation and especially since the work involved a displaced, vulnerable population. Wolf admonished those who ascribe to anthropological research methods that,

Anthropologists must be constantly aware of how these differences in power can distort their perceptions and skew their interpretations. Obviously, they must also be careful not to take advantage of their (usually) considerably greater power in ways that will disadvantage the people they are studying (1992, p. 6).

For that reason, going through the IRB process was extremely important. From a university perspective, the IRB office is the only authority that could determine whether conducting research with these individuals is deemed safe. However, whether affected individuals are ready to talk about their experiences can perhaps best be measured through our own moral compass. As such, the ethic of care puts an emphasis on the duty to interact with participants on their own terms and respond accordingly to mutual, individual, and institutional moral fabrics (Fisher, 1997; Noddings, 1984). Nevertheless, “the debate pivots on the tension between the need to develop evidence-based emergency...measures and the need to protect vulnerable populations from possible exploitation or harm,” (Leaning, 2001, p. 1432). Considering the exposed circumstances of the affected population, especially post-disaster, how likely is it for the potential participants to sign an informed consent form truthfully and with requisite knowledge of what their signatures entail? Since one of the main prerequisites for participation is to be in a sound psychological state, how would a researcher determine whether the disaster-affected individual is capable of providing sound responses and consent for

conducting research? Given the magnitude of the impact of the devastation on displaced persons, a significant number of whom remain displaced, one must also keep in mind the question: what is the post-disaster person's motivation for participating in this study?

The majority of discussions on ethics and research take place in the medical world. The parameters are more defined and presume an easier manner of decision-making than in social sciences. The federal government and IRB offices serve as main reviewing bodies whether a research is considered volatile and suggest alternate venues in the effort to protect the participants and to avoid potential harm.

Adopting a research agenda with vulnerable populations requires investigators who are knowledgeable, sensitive, and conscientious. Strategies that contribute to the integrity and the expertise of the researcher (and research study) include: biweekly seminars, training sessions for research team members, consultations with ethicists, journal clubs, access to resources, collaborations between investigators, and consultations with vulnerable populations, (Peternelj-Taylor, 2005, p. 353).

All of these ideas also need to include social, cultural, economic, political, and scientific aspects. The social and cultural understanding of place and power structures as they exist among the population under study ought to be explored and noted as to how they affect the study and the way it is conducted. For example, any temporary housing or "refugee camps themselves give rise to conditions that increase the vulnerability of refugees in potentially abusive research practices," (Leaning, 2001, p. 1433). This can arise from either direct or indirect interaction with the researchers. If the point of research is to determine individuals' resiliency to trauma, and asking the participants to recount, or relive, the traumatic experiences, it may cause more psychological setbacks. Another example would include elements of research in refugee camps when "sampling techniques may confer unintended negative attention or focus on particularly vulnerable subpopulations, such as women and children, and make conditions worse," (Leaning, 2001, p. 1433). If a participant chooses to disclose personal information about an incident, and

people from the participant's village or tribe find out that he or she were raped at any point, they may shun that person and not allow them to come back. Hence, those conducting the study have to be cognizant of potential negative consequences for the participants.

Moreover, one must consider the political status of the volatile population. Refugees and internally displaced population (IDPs) possess fewer political rights than those in stable countries, as mentioned in chapter 2. It has been noted that in many instances, human rights get violated; which brings one to question the wisdom of letting humanitarian agencies and international (sometimes) governing bodies secure the affected population before any research could be done. Fluid populations such as refugees are considered hostile targets for those who force them to leave their homes (Leaning, 2001). Further, most of the international codes and regulations depicting research ethical parameters do not include such special circumstances as enlisting refugees or evacuees, or for that matter, any research measures to protect them. On the other hand, when research is crucial then "gaining access to potential research participants is consistently cited as one of the most difficult aspects of conducting research with vulnerable populations (Anderson & Hatton, 2000; Flaskerud & Winslow, 1998; Horowitz et al., 2002; Leeman et al., 2002; Moore & Miller, 1999; Owen, 2001)," (Paternelj-Taylor, 2005, p. 354). However, let us return to the potentiality of exploitation.

Though it is clearly an unacceptable action, questions arise about who would oversee and ensure that exploitation and the lowering one's ethical standards would not take place. I personally observed and noted several instances where researchers from other institutions came into RV and offered Wal-Mart gift cards if the participants would fill out their surveys and answer several interview questions. Though I am not here to question whether their research would be valid, considering that many individuals needed additional income in any way it

presented itself, such instances caused me to question how truthful the participants' answers could have been.

When the goals of science and ethics appear to conflict, investigators studying vulnerable populations draw upon their own moral compass, the advice of colleagues, and recommendations of institutional review boards (IRBs) to make decisions about ethical procedures that will have immediate and possibly long-term impact on individual subjects, their families, and the communities they represent, (Fisher, 1997, p. 1).

Bias

I understand that my proposed study comes close to six years after the devastation wrought by the hurricanes. However, this allowed for a deeper, more retrospective examination (Wolf, 1992) of what elements contributed to successful, culturally relevant post-disaster educational programming, and what elements failed in terms of cultural responsiveness at RV. Further, all of the participants of LSU COE's DEP have moved, and changed their addresses and contact information. Therefore, it was extremely difficult to conduct follow up interviews with former participants. The only individuals that were still somewhat present, and who would be willing to participate in this study, are former LSU students whom I have taught and with whom I have kept in touch with. As they no longer receive any grades from me, I am no longer in a power position regarding academic success, thus accessing their journals and diabloogs post-disaster programming did not pose any academic ethical dilemmas as far as their participation.

Chapter 5: Triptych Portraits

After any piece of music the listener has the right to say, and can say: What does this mean? In a profound painting, on the contrary, this is impossible: one must fall silent when one has penetrated it in all its profundity. Then light and shadows, lines and angles, the whole mystery of volume begin to speak.

-De Chirico, 1985, p. 118

Aesthetics of a Ride

The evolution of the DEP and the facilities around them can only be described when taking into consideration their chronological significance. In keeping with the intent of this study to present a portrait of sorts of what occurred, I present the material using an art presentation design called a triptych. A triptych is a work of art composed of three main panels (Wikipedia, n.d.). The origin of this structure comes from Ancient Romans but used most popularly in early Christian art, where portrayals of Bible scenes were featured above altars in sets of three panels. This art form seemed most appropriate since it allowed me to present each stage of DEP's development as its own panel. Before describing the set of three, I must first present the frame and context in which these triptych was placed. The journey starts from a gathering of a small LSU COE crew: one faculty member, two graduate students, and several LSU volunteer students, and a general intent to help the evacuees at RV. The true programming would not take place until reconnaissance was conducted on what was needed and what other programs our efforts could supplement. For that purpose, the first trip to RV in mid-April 2006 was the most significant event.

The spring wind was gently swaying the LSU oak tree branches, making the air cooler than expected. April weather was never predictable and the weatherman always lied. Though the hurricanes passed through a few months before, LSU campus was still full of emergency workers and random volunteers, though not as many as there were initially. The emergency workers' camp in the South Stadium field of the LSU campus area was completely abandoned, although

their shadows and the extensively trampled grass still reminded those around that something took place there. Spring courses began like any other typical semester, yet with more students enrolled in each classroom. Campus and all the restaurants in the area were continuously crowded, gas stations were still running low or out of gas, and grocery stores were always quick to empty their shelves and struggled to maintain stock. Emergency mode did not end here.

Many evacuees still huddled together in apartments across the area, and many more were begging in the streets. The rumors of rising crime rates continued for many more months – many untrue, but some warranted. Chaos continued. Yet, by spring many of the evacuees were slowly being relocated to trailer parks around Baton Rouge and its surrounding areas. Those who found themselves in those trailer parks had no means of transportation- public or private- to get back into the city, which cleared the traffic and general congestion off the streets. Many Baton Rougians were relieved to see their city slowly returning to its normal state; however, many were more than aware that a different kind of changes were about to ensue.

Our small group met at the Peabody Hall parking lot. Everyone was wearing LSU T-shirts and carried bags full of extra layers of clothes, in case the weather changed again. The trees swayed with another gust of wind, this time colder than before but no one seemed to have noticed it. Everyone was excited and nervous at the same time. For the past two weeks, everyone had been preparing for this moment. As a graduate assistant, I was the one selected to be in charge of selecting and hiring volunteers. It was never made clear to me what the source of the money that would pay for these chosen few was, but then again, I was a novice and never cared to ask. I was simply too naïve to even pose such questions at the time. The major concern was to have a group of volunteers who had experience in education, whether in leading an education program or volunteer experience in schools. An email advertisement was sent out to the general

COE community but also with the help of COE's Public Affairs office, we created and posted ads in major halls and colleges in an effort to solicit volunteers:

Become one of the eight to twelve undergraduate/graduate students to join the Delta Express Project! Students selected for this program will serve as paid tutors for kindergarten to secondary school-aged children living at Renaissance Village (FEMA trailer park for displaced families in nearby Baker)! This exciting project is a collaborative effort involving various university, community, and corporate partners including LSU's College of Education; [Major West Coast institution]; Baton Rouge Area Foundation; the LA Department of Education; CISCO; Apple; and others (P. Exner, personal communication, April 15, 2006).

Soon, I had collected more than 20 applicants; unfortunately, most of whom could not dedicate adequate time to our cause. After interviewing all applicants, only 5 managed to fit our criteria, and luckily, all were education majors, and advantageously, most hailed from the New Orleans area.

Carpooling was not a problem since Katrina; most people had gotten used to sharing things now. This time was an opportunity to bond over shared experiences, and that was exactly what we were all about to do once again. Two cars were ready to go and we embarked on our journey. We slowly weaved our way through campus roads, trying to watch for random pedestrians and bikers speeding through, constantly switching between sidewalks and main roads, until finally we managed to leave the immediate area of the campus. The change is almost impossible not to notice –oak trees are no longer the main décor and red brick shingled rooftops are no longer the common feature. We passed by the LSU lakes, the man-made lake where, during Mardi Gras, local artists place giant plywood pink flamingos, celebrating the Spanish Town Parade. They patiently wait until college students steal all of them, thus continuing the tradition from the 1970s, mocking American middle-class through bloviating garden decorations. A Native of Poland and Europe in general, where gnomes serve as our 'pink flamingo' and where the

clandestine ‘Free the Gnome Society’ continuously seeks to free all garden gnomes and place them back in the woods, with the conviction that it is where they truly belong, I was used to such concept. Stealing six-foot tall pink flamingos is not as far-culturally fetched for me, as it would seem. Soon we were on the ramp to join the traffic on Interstate-10 heading toward downtown and the airport area.

Baton Rouge and south Louisiana are predominantly flat. On a clear day, one can look for miles beyond the horizon, only to be blocked by the occasional high-rise, billboard, elevated interstate bridge or overpass. Such landscape facilitates easy observation. As we traveled the snaking interstate through the center of Baton Rouge, I immediately noticed that the types of cars quickly changed. Coming from LSU to the center, the cars seemed to range from Hondas to Volvos and even BMWs, while past downtown toward the direction of the airport, cars turn into a blend of old Chryslers, Gio’s, and old Chevrolet models. Underneath the interstate public transportation buses, acronymic as CATS, passed swiftly through the neighborhoods. For some reason, these buses are not as well kept as those around campus. Clearly it appeared we were passing the poorer areas of Baton Rouge. Finally the airport loomed into sight and with it the surrounding FEMA trailer parks: Airport 1, Airport 2, Airport 3, etc. They seemed scattered but at a quick glimpse they looked occupied, with random individuals suddenly appearing and disappearing behind rows of trailers. When I asked if we were going to do any work there, my professor simply replied, “We’re going to a place where we can help the most people in one location.” I was left hopeful that some other organization or university would provide services in those areas. I did not learn whether any of my hopes came to fruition until much later.

We kept on moving on. Scottlandville was our exit and the second to last one on Interstate-110. We were now in Baker, a Baton Rouge suburb. Passing through Baker neighborhoods was

eye opening in itself. Though the road was in great condition, buildings and establishments around it left much to be desired. A great Exxon Mobil refinery encompassed a long stretch of horizon on the left hand side. A “tank farm” as I learned it was also called, referring to the giant storage facilities, with train tracks being the only line that separated us from being engulfed by the industrial zone, while on the other side, dilapidated government housing stood, surrounding a recreation park and a series of second hand stores, and pawn shops as well as fast food restaurants and shacks. Though I was impressed with the number of local food places outnumbering the standard McDonalds, Burger Kings, and Popeye’s, most places were empty or closed—many with boarded-up over glass windows and doors. Yet despite the forlorn and derelict appearance of the neighborhood, plenty of people were on the streets.

We continued to drive down two more lights and our desired street cryptically emerged: Groom Road (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Groom Road Sign

We climbed the incline to cross the train tracks. That day I learned the saying ‘being on the wrong side of the train tracks,’ and though at the time, I did not know what it meant, I soon understood its true meaning; I was hoping it was wrong in our case. At the same time, I came to realize that everyone seemed to bring up all of his or her proverbs to conversations when

attempting to cope with the chaotic emergency response - some in the attempt to mollify the tension while others could not find any other way to describe particular situations. For example, one I heard repeatedly was ‘time heals all wounds.’ Unfortunately, I found myself following suit, though not intentionally but simply by proxy; however, most of mine seemed to lose their meaning once literal translation was applied. I knew I was going to learn new cultural elements on this trip, however, American proverbs were not one I anticipated.

We slowed down on the road to make sure we didn’t miss our next turn. From the surrounding vagabond brush emerged a small, yet typical, Southern church (Figure 3). Its snow-white walls and steeple barely peered through not only from the roadside brush the tall pine trees surrounding it. Its stain glass windows gave a small burst of color on the ground, whispering its secret presence. It was a little piece of magic hidden away.



Figure 3. Piece of Magic in the Land of Uncertainty

Unfortunately, its splendor disappeared quickly from sight. Immediately past the church, a water company’s off-site office building was located along a poorly kept canal. Dirty and choked with debris, it was passing underneath the road. Further along, on one side, a small neighborhood emerged with random plots of land abandoned or for sale. Dogs were wandering freely along the streets, while neighbors could be seen sifting through their garages and driveways. Directly

facing them was a chain-link fence, stretching over two miles long and a mile wide, on top was barbed wire with only one entrance and exit (Figure 4). The atmosphere appeared to be changing into a bleaker atmosphere or environment, almost a tangible mood, where simplicity of décor and practicality of facilities at hand became the rudimentary landscape.



Figure 4. Enclosed by Barbwire Fence

All around were armed security guards patrolling the perimeter. It was as if I stepped into another warzone but on US soil, or worse, one of the concentration camps like the ones in Poland, so much a part of my ethnic memory. The atmosphere was ominous. Our professor told us to prepare our IDs and let him do the talking, instructing us to remain quiet. I kept thinking of similar confinements such as those Americans used to confine those of Japanese descent during World War II. These were American citizens, but they were most certainly confined to RV, complete with a guard shack and barbwire fencing.

Internally Enclosed

The security, though courteous to us, was adamant to know why our presence was needed, especially since we were from LSU and COE. Many organizations and service providers were less than welcome due to many visitors who attempted to take advantage of RV residents, while in other situations, they exposed and criticized the already strained relationship between FEMA and RV residents. Press was especially most unwelcome at the time (Smolen, 2006).



Figure 5. Security Gates

There were six security guards at the immediate gated booth: two in the booth checking everyone's ID, both entering and leaving the premises; another two in the corners of the gate looking for any sign of trouble, while another two were positioned a few steps from the gate but appeared close enough to step in if anything should happen. All were dressed in black, except for their t-shirts that had bright yellow writing "Security" on their breast and back. Almost all of them were Caucasian and one Asian, at least at the gate. The gate itself was the only area that had a semblance of street and gravel, just beyond was a single gray snake of a road that passed through the middle of the park; to its sides were nothing but rocks and dust. A cloud of dirt rose when anyone walked outside. It was easy to tell the extent of activity and movement at RV that way. I wondered if this was just the way it was or, if this was intentional.

It looked pretty bleak and everything looked white. So coming from New Orleans where everything was grey, this was where everything was white: the trailers were white, the ground was with white shells, the tent was white, the tables were white, and everything was white, except the people. It was just kind of grim. It almost looked like army housing in a sense where everything was all one color, but it was just grim, (Jetson, 2011).

I was too absorbed by my new surroundings to notice the extent of frustration of these security guards as to what our purpose was and who sent us. It was later that I found out that one of the local not-for-profit individuals, Sister Judith Brun (currently with Inspire Charter School in

Baton Rouge), had fought with FEMA to allow for LSU staff to enter and help conduct educational activities (Smolen, 2006). Eventually, several other cars behind us lined up, and it seemed as if they were forced to let us pass through the gates and enter RV. When I asked, “Where in the park are we supposed to stop and conduct our initial activities?”, I was told to look for a brown trailer, where the current library was located.

Slowly, we began to journey into the depths of RV. All trailers were neatly organized into identical rows extending half a mile in each direction. Every one of them was white. They seemed identical at first glance but soon small differences could be noticed, mainly their names and size: Cougar, Mountain Trail, Eagle, etc. Occasionally, one could spot a car parked next to one or two, but for the most part there was nothing special or indicative about the people who inhabited them. The spaces between the trailers were void of signs of life. No children played outside and adults were scarce. No toys, bikes, balls or other children’s playthings were observed. Occasionally a random person would pass by, quickly disappearing behind the next trailer, emerging and disappearing almost like phantoms in dust clouds. It was surreal, spooky even, and I felt unsettled.



Figure 6. Aerial Image of Renaissance Village

In RV proper, there were close to 15 rows of trailers on the left-hand side and six on the right, then the road turned deeper into the park to expose another large part of the park, where

more rows seemed to stretch endlessly. It was at this point that I began to realize just how many people might be confined to this area. We drove straight on without turning. A wide-open area was on our right, just after the road that turned to the right. In the midst, two brown trailers sat mournfully. While all the other trailers were shining bright with their white coats, these ones stood out as if meant for another purpose. I soon learned one was the library, while the other housed auxiliary services for FEMA workers and RV security (Figure 7). Behind these brown trailers was a small white tent. It had no door flaps like a regular tent and served as more of a canopy against the spring sun, and I noted that it was becoming increasingly hotter since that morning. Picnic tables were moved inside the tent. For now, this was the only public space with shade, and that's where we were told we would hold our first meeting after getting a tour of the library. Next to the tent was a recently cemented basketball court. It was the only area for recreation for the residents. It was also the only place where children of all ages could be seen. Beyond the basketball court was a forested area with more picnic tables and barbeque grills. It looked inviting to me. We soon learned that that space was off limits for residents and those conducting programming because it posed a fire hazard.



Figure 7. Sole Entertainment Area

We parked the car and went to the first brown trailer. Another service provider met us inside and gave us an orientation as to the security officers' rules and regulations. One of the main things

emphasized was the need for all services to be temporary and to help residents' transition from RV and beyond - details as to where they were to transition to after RV, were not specified. Another service provider, Tommy Cowsar, showed us current facilities and activities conducted there. A small group of children huddled inside one of the trailers engaged in the activity they were doing. Cowsar was not affiliated with any government agency or organization but a volunteer, who developed with his family a Mathematics board game; MathGym. When he came to donate a few sets, he decided that his help was needed beyond simple donations. He started an unofficial education program at RV. His motto, 'as long as they learned something everyday,' pervaded his conversation and indicated to me his intentions. Considering that many parents put their children on school buses when trying to evacuate from the New Orleans' Superdome and buses had no defined destinations, many families were separated for extensive amounts of time, only to be reunited thanks to the American Red Cross (Smolen, 2006). I learned that many children were not enrolled in school, and understandably, at least to me, was that many parents felt reluctant to send their children on a random bus when they could not visit their children's schools. As such, they preferred to have them close by.

Consequently, many children did not attend school. Cowsar's intent was to make sure that these children were still engaged in learning and educational activities so that they would not lag farther behind their peers. Together with another LSU student, unrelated to our program, he conducted daily school-like activities for kids ranging from 5 to 14 years of age (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2006). Upon learning of our purpose there, he immediately became excited about having more individuals involved in such efforts who could help him out as well. He instantly offered to gather some parents and children to determine the needs of families and what services they would need the most (Thomas, 2006). Luckily we brought pizzas with us, so finding willing

folks to talk to us was not an issue. We moved to the white tent outside, as not to disturb the few individuals who were inside intently browsing the Internet and reading donated books. We walked outside and immediately noticed that the weather had changed again; it was now hotter than an hour ago. Cowsar went to contact the families and ask for their assistance. In the meantime, our group began to discuss the grim conditions of RV as well as the hope that our help would be wanted from its residents. We settled in the tent around the three picnic tables that were inside. Anxious and nervous, we waited. Soon we had close to 10 parents and several children present.

One of the main things the professor specified to us was the need for community input. Parents seemed suspicious of our purpose but grateful for the free pizza that we brought. The other graduate student, Thomas, and I were equally grateful for free food, as always, but we were also wary, wondering how big of a benefit we might be by being there. Thankfully, the LSU undergraduate volunteers had no problem bonding with RV children. Soon they were chatting away, discussing mutual favorite foods, places, and games. Most of all, the children were surprised to learn that almost all of our volunteers were from New Orleans as well, and knew exactly where they came from in terms of neighborhood and wards (New Orleans' way of segmenting the city). Parents were reserved and expectedly, appeared more suspicious than their children. All of the parents were African American and appeared to be in their late 30s to 50s. One of the mothers was a secretary in a government office before the storm, and was dismayed by the amount of services that came and went as soon as their funding ran out or once they fulfilled their agenda (Thomas, 2006). Another parent, who was a small business owner, primarily complained about not having access to transportation and not able to go see what sort of schools or services were around Baker (Smolen, 2006). Another mother was on disability due

to advancement of breast cancer and was unable to get her insurance to refill her prescriptions because she lost all of her documents and the insurance could not verify her identity, and therefore would not issue a new insurance card. Without transportation, she could not go to the local DMV to get a copy of her driving license, and therefore was left with no medication (Jetson, 2006). She also had three children who all had learning disabilities, varying in severity. She indicated that she was wary of having them participate in our program as well as attend Baker schools because she did not want their situation to be more detrimental than it already was. Further, she remained steadfast and convinced they would be going back to New Orleans soon, and able to resume their pre-Katrina lives. And since the state standardized testing, Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP), was cancelled that year due to Katrina, she told us there was no reason to stress her children more with changing schools and dealing with new paperwork (Smolen, 2006). However, she was cautiously optimistic to hear about our intentions and ended up engaging with us as she contributed ideas for the program. In the end of our first visit, a list was obtained of their main concerns:

- Children not attending school
- Children attending school are often chastised in the public school environment
- Village lacking in areas for children to play
- Limited exercise and outdoor activities for children
- Adolescents and young adults needing opportunity for GED preparation
- Children having inadequate adult or parental supervision
- Lack of long-term commitment from volunteers and/or agencies
- Public unaware of reality within the village
- Adults, like children, in need of emotional healing (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2006)

When we asked what they would expect from our education program on a manageable scale, the parents simply asked us to teach their children something every day, following the type of programming done by Cowsar, and make sure that healthy snacks are served (Jetson, 2006, 2011; Thomas, 2011). Though we did not anticipate the program to cover snacks, it quickly became apparent that parents wanted that kind of provision. All of them were adamant that all snacks were healthy and no sugary drinks. Such expectations took me aback. From what I have been hearing about New Orleans population and reading about people in poverty, my understanding was that healthy nutrition seldom became their primary concern. To my surprise parents rapidly came up with a list of potential snacks: peanut butter crackers, baby carrots, apples, bananas, raisins, water, juice, etc. (Smolen, 2006). I was fervently writing all these items down when the professor turned to me and asked to switch my attention to the children and ask them what they wanted from an education program and try to determine their grade levels. At this point, many of our volunteers and children were discussing favorite desserts. Turning the topic to healthy snacks was clearly not going to be a success.

The 12 RV children who joined us at the tent were predominantly African American, with a pair of Native American siblings, and one White boy. They ranged between ages 4 and 16. Most of their clothing was dirty from the dust around the park. One little boy looked as though he had been recently crying; tear and snot marks were all over his face, yet now he was all smiles and eager to talk (Figure 8).



Figure 8. DEP's Initial Visit

Free drinks and pizza also helped. For the most part, the children were enamored by simply by our presence, our attention, and discussions of programming were the farthest thing from their minds. But the volunteers soon managed to finally create a list of all their favorite hobbies. Arts and crafts dominated the list. Many were, as it seemed to me, afraid of educational activities. They immediately shied away from topics surrounding education and subjects within (Smolen, 2006). It was then that we took out digital cameras that were intended for an auxiliary situation if gathering of information from kids was not going in the direction we wanted. Overly preparedness paid off. The kids were quick to snap pictures of everything around. They suggested showing us the giant trailers in the back of RV, which had been the ones donated by Television personality, Rosie O'Donnell as classroom trailers. This was the first mention of these trailers. They were twice as big as the library trailer, equally brown and elevated on cinder blocks. They were relinquished to the very back of RV, surrounded by dirt and adjacent to the nearest cow pasture. Cows could be seen curiously approaching the barbed wire fence when new visitors were spotted. When we asked, "Where did these trailers come from?" the RV children simply replied that some celebrity donated them but like most things, they can't use them (Smolen, 2006). Shortly after that we returned from the tour back to the tent.

Soon both parents and their children began to return back to their trailers. In the meantime, individuals from other organizations emerged from the other brown trailer by the basketball court. Soon, we were being called upon by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) individuals, who were informed that LSU folks were on premises, and discussions about official educational activities that were much needed ensued. Individuals from LC, Red Cross, and New Heights Parenting Center joined us at the picnic tables to discuss the near future changes to take place at RV regarding how to meet children's education needs.

The Rosie O'Donnell trailers that were donated months ago should be wired and ready for occupancy within the next two weeks. Twenty laptop Apple computers are ready to be put in the classrooms. The buildings should have wireless capabilities and when they are ready, we will be housed in the new classrooms for our project. There are 18 desktop PC's ready and waiting to be connected once the classrooms are finished. Once the classrooms are wired and occupancy ready, technology will be available for us to use as we begin working with the children, (Thomas, 2006).

In the meantime, the donated Apple laptops were locked in a warehouse with other donations that waited to be distributed when time was opportune. The Rosie O'Donnell classroom trailers were sitting in the very back of RV, waiting to be connected to electricity since November of 2005. The logistical battle between the Rosie O'Donnell charity foundation and FEMA continued for many more months; the two week prediction stated above was an optimistic thought. However, having those kinds of technology available once everything was installed provided our LSU team with great hope and enthusiasm to plan activities exposing the children to many technology-based activities.

By the time we finished talking with the residents and members from other organizations, the sun began to wane (Figure 9). With the amount of information gathered, the pragmatic part of programming began. When we finally returned back to campus, we knew our work and help would have to extend for a long time. In the days following our initial meeting with the RV

residents, a slew of meetings with the college faculty, College of Education's public relations personnel, our new partners with a major West Coast institution, and LSU volunteers occurred. Due to all of the facilities around campus being used by the influx of students, all of our meetings had to take place off campus and most of our planning had to be conducted in restaurants and cafes or at each other's apartments (Smolen, 2006). Although I didn't know it at the time, using any area readily available to us was the beginning of my work as a bricoleur.



Figure 9. RV by Dusk

It was during those meetings that the final name and description of Delta Express Program was agreed upon, was defined, and determined how it would fit into the mission of the COE and LSU. Originally, Delta Express was a railroad connection between West Coast and Louisiana. The name was picked in recognition of the extensive partnership with Major West Coast institution and their suggested idea for a program. With the main intent of LSU COE being to further develop positive relations with the community and build new partnerships across the nation, an inter-university and cross-disciplinary connection seemed to fit ideally. Further, Major West Coast institution had experience working in international locations and specialized in places with limited resources while providing successful programming. With their experience and our resources Delta Express was bound to succeed. In the end, the official description of the programs was:

Delta Express Program is an after-school tutoring program devoted to providing educational support and services to children and families affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, who reside in the FEMA trailer park - Renaissance Village (RV). It is a University-Community collaborative that includes partners such as Louisiana State University College of Education and University of West Coast, Berkeley and the state-wide UC Links network. The UC Links (University-Community Links) network provides access to quality educational resources and activities for children from diverse, low-income communities throughout West Coast and the world. The program encourages the use of technology to develop a variety of projects such as digital stories, music pieces, and many others. Such activities provide essential exposure to pieces of technology that children will come across in their futures, learn how to use them, and consequently develop lifetime skills. LSU serves as the primary partner with UC Links for sites in Louisiana. The Delta Express collaborative fulfills the threefold mission of integrating community service with teaching and research. Providing quality learning opportunities for children and their families in south Louisiana, the Delta Express project offers valuable fieldwork settings where university faculty and students create engaging educational programs for youth while also developing quality educational experiences for university undergraduate and graduate students (LSU COE Public Office, 2006, n.p.).

Consequently, the main focus of our initial trips to RV entailed conducting educational activities with children in RV, gaining trust of the community, and providing immediate services that were most needed and as specified by the residents. The initial meeting with the community helped in providing us with the idea of what types of programs existed and what organizations were out there, in order to avoid replicating practices. Furthermore, as UC Links program focused on exposing children to new technology and providing a venue for expression, it became apparent that computers and such will need to be provided for the site. The main goal emphasized by UC Links was for the participants of Delta Express to create digital stories about their experiences with Katrina and explore their emotional state, all in the effort to determine what they perceive as important of what happened in the past and what they believe they need in their near future, so that it may be used for research sometime in the future (Smolen, 2006). The Rosie O'Donnell facilities were much needed to fulfill that mission.

Triptych Part One – Summer Dream

By providing contextual basis of where DEP had found itself. I can now present the chronological development of the program. The following is a thick description (Geertz, 2000) of planned programming as well as actual events.

Organized Chaos

While waiting on the installation of Rosie O'Donnell's classroom trailers, we proceeded with activities with a small inclusion of technology. Several more digital cameras were soon acquired for the initial activities to assess whether the children were interested in constructing digital stories. It soon became apparent that the kids wanted to take pictures of their friends and family simply because they lost everything in the flood and had no physical mementoes left. But participating in structured activities was not something they wanted to do, at least not yet (Thomas, 2006). Laptops were borrowed from LSU COE technology office for the duration of summer months to attempt to interest the RV children in learning how to use them in structured activities; however, once they learned that no games existed on the machines, their interest faded. Picture taking persisted as a main attraction and with undying interest, but now the DEP participants wanted copies of all images. Portable printer/scanners were purchased, which helped in creating several more activities. Though the children were not interested in uploading the images onto the laptops or attempting to create digital stories via PowerPoint or Photoshop®, they were interested in recreating their scrapbooks and new albums of where they were at the time (Smolen, 2006). The lingering hope of Rosie O'Donnell's facilities being operational persisted throughout the entire summer.

In the meantime, the LSU volunteers began talking about their favorite topics for exploration, cartoons, and games. The conversations gained life and we continued to develop

relationships with the new DEP participants. It became clear that no official programming could take place until trust was established. Like an anthropologist or ethnographer, gaining knowledge about the children and learning what motivated them through what they were interested in became a crucial part for this initial stage of DEP. In one instant a boy, Roger (pseudonym), admitted loving to play dominoes because when he lived in New Orleans, he and his grandfather played every weekend and after school. When asked where his grandfather was, he replied that he probably drowned in their house; he did not have a way to evacuate (Smolen, 2006). Taken aback at first, I slowly became desensitized to such casual remarks and soon, accepted them as typical. Dominoes were put on the list of activities (Figure 10). Overtime, other similar stories were related. However, over the course of 2006 summer, different forms of playing dominoes were introduced. In the end, DEP was able to adapt Math concepts of multiples and sums to the game, making everyone practice their multiplication tables etc. Using cross-generational, yet cultural, games became a norm in the tent, and in retrospect, using a familiar cultural play form became very important to successful programming. Field notes revealed that parents, family members, community members, and the RV kids would play for hours at a time.

However, minimalist activities worked; the culture of the village shined during this time. Dominoes were held in the hands of the young, adolescent and adults in an identical manner, which amazed me as I viewed the cultural tradition from the other side of the tent. Activities of playing games with the residents of the village were successful during this interim period and relationships became stronger between parent volunteers, students, Tommy Cowsar, and me, (Thomas, 2006).



Figure 10. Bricoleur in Action

By the time Delta Express was established as a fixture on the premises, the children's interests lied in finding a safe place to meet with friends (Jetson, 2011) and escape their surroundings by engaging in what they wanted, which was not always consistent with what we wanted (Thomas, 2006). However, seeing as to not add pressure into their daily lives and respond in a proactive manner, the program remained flexible to what the residents wanted to do as well as what they needed. This also emerged as an important aspect of programming: what the program facilitators deemed important versus what participants viewed as important. Over time, DEP was able to address school subjects, such as combining dominoes and Math curriculum. The main goal throughout was to maintain consistency and transparency of intentions and activities. The consistency of presence that LSU volunteers provided remained a crucial ingredient. "The relationship must encompass trust, dependability, and kindness," (Thomas, 2006).

By end of April 2006, the Rosie O'Donnell buildings were still not installed. The pressure of having no established and equipped buildings was beginning to manifest in trying to develop quality programming with minimal amount of resources. "Patience is necessary during the initial stages of any innovation," (Thomas, 2006). Further, the issue of having regular participants in the program started to emerge as an issue as well. For Thomas, a veteran teacher

in Baton Rouge school system, having a properly structured form of organization and rules was daily bread. However, with the circumstances at hand, it was difficult to establish that resembled normalcy, such as regular program attendees and any semblance of discipline. The subject was brought to the table several times to the university staff and our Berkeley partners, who either dismissed the subject as unimportant or insisted that our program was not to force the RV children into anything that they didn't want to do. Consequently, "students are allowed to meander about from center to center," (Thomas, 2006). One day we would have three participants, and on another day we would be visited by over 20. This provided a challenge for those of us who were on site and tried to conduct activities in a structured and organized manner. "Our goal is to assist students in overcoming the stigma that learning is difficult and boring. The goal of Delta Express is that learning is fun," (Thomas, 2006). However, this attempt was constantly stifled by behavioral issues as well as not being able to plan long-term activities with uncertain number and dedication from its participants. As a result, an idea sprung by Thomas, Jetson and myself; with full support from an LSU professor, the plan was to hire RV parents to officially assist with the programming and have them administer culturally appropriate discipline practices (Smolen, 2006). Considering that many a times we were met with threats and accusations of, "You can't tell me what to do, you're a white girl," (Smolen, 2006) this inclusion of parents was considered a way to solve the dilemma and help in building and maintaining further relationship with RV community members. Soon three of the parents were hired. With their help, a significant number of the behavioral issues were addressed and subsequently subsided. Additionally, parents were grateful to have a small form of income supplementing their daily needs. These particular parents were involved in the initial meeting in April and therefore

knew exactly what we were hoping to achieve; together more appropriate planning was created. Some of the activities that were planned in joint efforts included:

- Collage center – make train cars with themes
- Sidewalk chalk
- Buttons with pictures and names (Jetson, 2006; Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2006).

The last one was especially helpful to those of us who could not remember the names of all the children, and for those names whose spelling presented a challenge, as well as buttons for our names and for those participants who occasionally joined the activities. The sidewalk chalk activity was most popular among the youngest children who wanted to play hopscotch with the LSU volunteers. Developing alphabet hopscotch proved to be equally popular and fun, when trying to have the youngest participants (3 and 4 years old) practice their letters and in an effort to infuse English language arts (ELA) activities into program activities. However, these activities did not follow the predetermined design of DEP and UC Links agenda.

It was during this time that the first mention of a COE course to be developed for the fall semester was featured as an item on program development agenda (Thomas, 2006). The course would encompass one hour of lab at RV (Thomas, 2006). The mention of this course sparked enthusiasm and more work for me, since I was the graduate assistant assigned solely to this program. Part of my charges were to additionally develop ways to conduct class conferences with those in West Coast, who work with kids in Brazil remotely (via Internet). Having both LSU and Major West Coast institution students share their experiences and classroom readings, this was perceived as a way to provide an innovative learning environment for all parties.

Meanwhile, May came along, making the weather hotter than before, and dealing with the end of the spring semester left DEP with the difficulty of having sufficient staff to continue

the programming. We were left with only four LSU individuals: Thomas, Jetson, one other volunteer and me. “Culture, street knowledge, and dissimilar interests contribute to the impossibility of four people being able to plan an agenda and meeting the needs of all the individuals,” (Thomas, 2006). It started to become apparent that LSU and Berkeley were not on the same page when it came to DEP operations. The LSU professor who was initially the main link between the universities started to be phased out from the communication lines and Berkeley was contacting Thomas and me directly. However, being aware of our station at LSU, and having no decisive power, each phone call from them was immediately followed by attempts to contact the professor for approval and guidance. The professor continued to emerge on occasion to support our decisions and constantly asked what sorts of supplies we needed to help our programming. Having expressed multiple times the need for O’Donnell’s facilities to be opened and questioning whether any new information emerged, our pleas and complains usually fell upon deaf ears, until one day.

In late May beginning of June, the professor disappeared for several days only emerge one weekend, calling upon all DEP volunteers to come over to his house. Upon arrival, in his driveway stood a rusty, dilapidated classroom bus! It turned out that our pleas were not completely ignored. Having found the classroom bus on EBay for a reasonable price, he took a trip with his family to the mid-West to pick it up (Smolen, 2006). Though the idea seemed grand, the bus was overrun with rust and sharp edges. It would be a miracle if the kids using it did not get Tetanus. Apparently the person selling the bus welded it himself and admittedly lacked proper skills to make all edges rounded and pretty (Smolen, 2006). Having doubts about these plans, I contacted the COE Dean’s office with my concerns and I was met with disbelief. The next day, the office of Sponsored Programs received a receipt from EBay and a request for

reimbursement for the bus. I immediately got a call from the Dean's Office mandating stoppage of all programming or planning involving the bus (Smolen, 2006). Needless to say, reimbursement never took place, much to the professor's dismay, and the bus never left his driveway (Smolen, 2006). However, this incident contributed to the phasing out of the professor from further LSU COE communications regarding DEP. This incident also emerged as important to me. I wondered how such a bus could be considered appropriate for any child but especially uprooted, traumatized children. I reconciled my feelings with the thought that the condition of the bus was unknown prior to purchase. Since the inside politics among the LSU staff were completely kept separate from the rest of the DEP staff, this kept us unaware from whom we should seek guidance. Consequently our attempts to contact the professor were increasingly futile. "The continual communication and support between all members of the team is essential for the plan to continue and thrive in the challenging learning environment of RV" (Thomas, 2006). Thomas, and I were the ones in charge, whether we knew it or not.

The month of May, 2006, brought much more frustration to those of us on the site. The continuous absence of Rosie O'Donnell's facilities increased the amount of impatience from Berkeley partners, and with no direct LSU support, we were left to argue our case based solely on what was taking place at RV and its conditions. By the end of May, the partner university sent a few of its own students to participate and, we suspect, to verify that what was being communicated over emails and phones was true regarding the difficulties on site for implementation of digital story components into programming (Smolen, 2006). It soon became apparent to them that LSU was not intentionally stalling the process. "The planning for the continuance of the project into the summer continues and rough roads have been traveled with a predetermined avail," (Thomas, 2006).

June 2006 continued to provide challenges between the institutions. DEP volunteers, both LSU and Berkeley, were going to RV four times a week, sometimes five, depending on activity and requests from children. As the days began to grow hotter and other programs began to fade out due to their staff taking vacation (Smolen, 2006), DEP emerged as the sole program on site, with only Art Therapy, a West Coast-based organization, to occasionally conduct activities. Cowsar continued to be a faithful community partner who showed up everyday to help the children and us in any capacity. He was the one who arranged for industrial-sized extension cords to be put in the tent so that more technological activities could be conducted; however, the interest in these activities only extended to taking pictures of their surroundings and making picture frames, rather than stories. The RV children insisted on doing arts and craft almost every day that we came. However, new needs emerged due to weather and a consistent group of children expecting new activities. The DEP volunteers increased their amount of trips to RV twofold. They were now going at least four times each week, with pleas from the children to come during the weekend (Smolen, 2006). It was also during that time, that more LSU students learned about the program and wanted to volunteer- amongst them were international students. In most cases, the LSU volunteers were able to receive a small payment and reimbursement for their mileage with the available grant money; unfortunately for international students, in order to maintain their legal status, they are unable to work off campus without a work permit, while other international graduate students could not be paid due to preexisting assistantships or on-campus positions. There were a few international students who did, in the end, continue to work with DEP in their spare time, apparently driven by the need to help and assist (Smolen, 2006). The presence of several international students at RV provided many opportunities to discuss other countries around the world. Various activities were developed that allowed the children to

teach the international students about New Orleans and vice versa (Smolen, 2006). Again, as I reflected on field notes, this kind of activity also emerged as significant. Children shared their stories orally, an important culturally-specific and familiar form of communication, but this also allowed DEP participant children to emerge as experts at their own lives. Using the cultural capital of the children, and by extension, their families, was a crucial aspect of attempting culturally relevant programming. However, one day one opportunity came along to partially fulfill West Coast institution's mission.

One of the favorite activities for RV kids was creating their favorite animals from the articles and supplies that LSU volunteers brought for collage activities (Jetson, 2006). In a few instances, several participants wanted to share their creations with the rest of the group. Seeing a teachable moment and an opportunity to create a story for each animal, LSU volunteers began to take pictures, as participants were discussing what the story should be. In the end, the group chose one character, a traveling spider, that was saved from Katrina and was now a spider watching everyone from the tops of their heads (Jetson, 2006; Thomas, 2006). Though the actual story was never completed, it was put on record as a successful activity. This was the only digital story that was produced by the participants that summer, and many other attempts to conduct such activities failed. The West Coast institution volunteers focused a lot of their efforts to solicit any stories about the RV children's experience with Katrina. These attempts failed as well. The truth was the RV children were simply inundated with solicitations for their Katrina stories by different groups and organizations that came in and left, various media, and poaching researchers interested in gathering life stories from any willing resident and child (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2011). My field notes reveal that I was very wary of West Coast institution volunteers being so focused on their needs, and negating what the children really wanted and needed. In the effort to

distinguish us as not the poaching type of program, our attempts had to be more subtle. However, we started to feel the pressure for such stories from the university staff as well. The professors from both institutions were writing grants to support our efforts at RV, with that in mind, they needed anecdotes from RV residents to bolster their arguments and our chances to get the much-needed financial support. Though a minimal amount of stories were gathered, grants were awarded to LSU. One of the tenets for support was to grant us the ability to include fieldtrips into our programming (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2006).

The idea of fieldtrips emerged during the time between May/June – in between semesters. This was the time when Major West Coast institution and LSU began to seek grant money for activities to be conducted at RV and beyond. The first fieldtrip was scheduled by DEP was for June 20th to the Baton Rouge zoo. Considering that Art Therapy and DEP were the only programs that came on regular basis [Art Therapy once every month for a period of several days], it seemed logical to coordinate this trip together. Sister Judith, who continued to monitor and provide assistance to RV residents via sending various organizations to the site to establish operations, sprang this idea, (Thomas, 2006).

Though at first glance the partnership with the two organizations seemed an ideal solution to solve the issue of having sufficient amount of adults and chaperones on site, “the art therapy people completely took over,” (Jetson, 2006). It quickly became apparent, that though DEP organized the sign-up sheet for both parents and children willing to attend, and organized tours with the Baton Rouge Zoo staff, our role was perceived as minute. Granted the transportation from RV to the Zoo was organized by Art Therapy, as well as the recruitment of additional volunteers to help with the trip, their relationship with and knowledge of RV residents was clearly lacking. Moreover, input from both Thomas and I was largely ignored and our involvement was perceived as merely secondary and insignificant.

There was this one little boy, Deacon [pseudonym] that Ms. Lesly assigned me to. In the process of assigning me to this kid, she not only insulted me and my ability to chaperone, but she totally labeled the child as troublesome in front of his face. I was highly taken aback by this. Linette

[pseudonym, another DEP volunteer] came over and volunteered to chaperone Deacon. I would have loved to stick with him, but Linette was overly eager so I let her take him. It turned out that Deacon was actually very quiet and he held Linette's hand the whole time. He was such a sweetheart! Now Ms. Lesly assigned me to be the chaperone for Yvette! Okay, does she realize that Yvette is 20 years old and accompanied by her mother!?!? To tell a 20 year old that she needs a chaperone is highly insulting, and I'm sure it is even more insulting for that chaperone to be the same age as her (Jetson, 2006).

At the end of the day when everyone returned to RV, the children complained that the trip could have been more enjoyable if not for the constant badgering to stay in a line and within view of their chaperone. The Baton Rouge Zoo is not a large zoo, therefore getting lost seemed highly unlikely; however, the strict rules and supervision by Art Therapy made the experience for the children restrictive and thus, less enjoyable. The following days brought more participants to our program than to that of Art Therapy (Jetson, 2006). For the rest of the summer, the RV children participated only with our program, raising our number of participants to a steady 15-20. Though the zoo fieldtrip was not a full success, it did convince other children of older ages (teenagers) to participate in our program that did not have such stringent rules. In many cases, they initially just came for snacks and drinks however over time, they began to slowly take part in the programming itself. "The continued goal of enabling students to participate in a fun, engaged learning environment focused on social, academic, and cultural experiences continues at Renaissance Village," (Thomas, 2006).

Organizing the Chaos

In the month of July, it was clear that the Rosie O'Donnell facilities would not be installed. Though several individuals came to examine the condition of the trailers, the problems of who would be responsible for payment for electricity and sewage once the facilities were opened stalled installation. When the donation of the trailers was made, it was never clarified who would be in charge of running the trailers and paying its bills. Within days another issue

arose regarding the trailers being put on RV grounds illegally and without consulting FEMA for a permit to actually install them. Apparently legal battle continued with Rosie O'Donnell's Children's Foundation and Federal authorities. All in all, this did not help our case to proceed with technology activities. The West Coast institution volunteers left in the middle of July, but the Major West Coast institution staff made several visits in the meantime. During that time West Coast institution continued to press the issue of creating digital stories with the residents, per their university mission. Discussions about using the relationships built by us to begin conducting West Coast institution's research with the RV residents kept surfacing. It was also during this time that the question of ethics began to emerge: when is it appropriate to conduct research with vulnerable population? How is "vulnerable population" defined? Is conducting research on a vulnerable population creating more harm to participants? My field notes and those of LSU students who were involved reveal many instances describing our discomfort with West Coast institution staff being so adamant about their needs. Upon reflection, I was struck by their self-serving behavior. The needs and wants of DEP children and families were seemingly ignored in the quest for usable data for their needs.

Ethical Dilemmas: Vulgar versus Vulnerable

"Vulnerable populations are typically described as those who are impoverished and disenfranchised, or those who are subject to discrimination, intolerance, subordination, and stigma," (Peternelj-Trung, 2005, p. 349). Along with those mentioned above, the homeless, people of color, immigrants, gay men and lesbians, mentally ill, chronically ill, and their caregivers also fall under similar category of vulnerability (Macklin, R., 2001; Killen M., 1996). "Vulnerability is a dynamic concept that continually evolves over time, and determining who

might be classified as vulnerable at any given time is a reflection of the societal values and beliefs of the day (Silva, 1995),” (Peternelj-Taylor, 2005, p. 349).

From the literature, three main sources and types of vulnerability emerge: intrinsic, extrinsic, and relational (Fisher, 1997; Peternelj-Taylor, 2005). The intrinsic refers to the individual limitation of one’s freedom and will, for example intelligence, maturity, etc. The extrinsic vulnerability encompasses the circumstantial factors that inhibit free choice making, such as financial dependency or hospitalization (Leaning, 2001). Finally, relational vulnerability “refers to cases whereby autonomy is limited by a relationship with another person, as illustrated in the power differential that exists between an offender and a correctional officer, a nurse and a client, or a researcher and a research participant,” (Peternelj-Taylor, 2005, p. 351). But these groups are not mutually exclusive and in many cases these sources overlap.

The ability to detect and minimize the sense of susceptibility can be done by the researcher with the application of justice-care framework as defined by Fisher (1997):

A justice-care framework recognizes that ethical principles can mediate our understanding of participant perspectives without placing a priority on the investigator’s interpretation of these principles over the moral frameworks of others, and that respecting research participants involves responding to them on the basis of their own self-conceptions, (p. 2).

And as such, the ethics of care puts an emphasis on the duty to interact with a participant on his or her own terms and respond accordingly to mutual, individual, and institutional moral fabrics (Noddings, 1984; Fisher, 1997). Nevertheless, “the debate pivots on the tension between the need to develop evidence-based emergency...measures and the need to protect vulnerable populations from possible exploitation or harm,” (Leaning, 2001, p. 1432). Considering the exposed circumstance of the affected population, especially post-disaster, how realistic was it for the potential participants to sign an informed consent form? Since one of the main prerequisites for participation is to be in a sound psychological state, how would a researcher determine

whether the disaster-affected population is capable of providing sound responses and consent for conducting research? With these notions in mind, I also kept in mind the question: what is the post-disaster person's motivation for participating in this study?

The majority of discussions on ethics and research take place in the medical world. The parameters are more defined and create an easier standard for decision-making than in social sciences. The federal government and Internal Review Board (IRB) offices serve as the main reviewing bodies on whether a research project is considerably volatile, and suggest alternate venues in the effort to protect the participants and to avoid potential harm. In fact, IRB requirements have their roots in an infamous medical experiment at the Tuskegee Institute, where 600 African American men were involved in an experiment to determine the natural history of syphilis (CDC, 2011). All participants of this study were not informed of the spectrum of the study and did not give their informed consent to participate. The study continued for more than 40 years (CDC, 2011) until an investigation was carried out and put a stop to the experiment. This experiment brought on a new practice to be required in any new study with human participants, and especially with those who might be considered a vulnerable population – informed consent forms.

Adopting a research agenda with vulnerable populations requires investigators who are knowledgeable, sensitive, and conscientious. Strategies that contribute to the integrity and the expertise of the researcher (and research study) include: biweekly seminars, training sessions for research team members, consultations with ethicists, journal clubs, access to resources, collaborations between investigators, and consultations with vulnerable populations, (Peternelj-Trung, 2005, p. 353).

All of these ideas also need to include the social, cultural, economic, political, and scientific aspects. The social and cultural understanding of place and power structures, as they exist among the population under study, ought to be explored and noted as they may affect the how the study is conducted. For example, any temporary housing or “refugee camps themselves give rise to

conditions that increase the vulnerability of refugees to potentially abusive research practices,” (Leaning, 2001, p. 1433). This can arise from either direct or indirect interaction with the researchers. If the point of a specific research study is to determine individuals’ resiliency to trauma, and the participants are asked to recount, or relive, the traumatic experiences, this may cause more psychological setbacks. Another example would include elements of research in refugee camps such as “sampling techniques may confer unintended negative attention or focus on particularly vulnerable subpopulations, such as women and children, and make conditions worse,” (Leaning, 2001, p. 1433; Bell & Carens, 2004). If a participant chooses to disclose personal information about an incident and people from the participant’s village or tribe find out that he or she were raped at any point, they may shun that person and not allow them to come back. Hence, those conducting the study have to be cognizant of potential negative consequences for the participants.

Moreover, the political status of the volatile population, such as refugees and internally displaced population (IDPs) possess fewer political rights than those in stable countries. It has been noted that in many instances, human rights get violated, which brings to question whether we should let the humanitarian agencies and international (and sometimes) governing bodies secure the affected population before any research could be done. Such fluid populations as refugees are considered hostile targets for those who force them to leave their homes (Leaning, 2001). Furthermore, most of the international codes and regulations depicting research ethical parameters do not include such special circumstances such as enlisting refugees or evacuees in any research, nor measures to protect them. On the other hand, when research is crucial, “gaining access to potential research participants is consistently cited as one of the most difficult aspects of conducting research with vulnerable populations (Anderson & Hatton, 2000;

Flaskerud & Winslow, 1998; Horowitz et al., 2002; Leeman et al., 2002; Moore & Miller, 1999; Owen, 2001),” (Peternelj-Taylor, 2005, p. 354). However, let us return to the potentiality of exploitation.

Another area that is unexplored occurs in the area of research done by individuals from industrialized countries on those in developing (I intentionally do not use third world as it is pejorative) countries. “So, although everyone agrees that exploitation is a serious moral wrong that must be avoided, there is no consensus on what constitutes exploitation and little in the way of sustained analysis of the concept in the context of international research,” (Macklin, 2001, p. 26). As of now, there is not a sufficient amount of procedural literature that would allow for clear delineation of what constitutes exploitation in one country and what meaning it may have in a different one. Therefore, it would be easy for (unethical) researchers to escape repercussion from their host countries, if cases arise. However, such accusations can be avoided if the developing country had a role in designing, approving, and conducting the research along with the international partner (Macklin, 2001; Fisher, 1997; Macklin, 2001; Leaning, 2001).

Macklin proposes for researchers, sponsors, and various ethical review bodies

to undertake a systematic review of these conditions prior to preparing a research protocol to implement in developing countries, it might provide a better way to assess vulnerability to exploitation in advance of initiating the research rather than opening it up to allegations once the research is underway. This type of prior investigation of the context in which the research is to be conducted will not appeal to those who seek to begin research as quickly as possible, either in order to reach scientific conclusions about safety and efficacy or, in the case of industry, to reap the maximum possible profits,” (2001, p. 33).

Furthermore, international investigators have been known for lowering the ethical standards, as they are featured in the industrialized country, when going to the developing one. Though it is clearly an unacceptable action, questions arise about who would oversee that the exploitation and lowering of one’s ethical standards would not take place. Countries that house

the evacuees or refugees are already preoccupied with the geopolitical and economic circumstances and do not, in most cases, have readily available staff to oversee academic/medical/or humanitarian research (Birman, 2006).

One venue that has not been discussed thus far is the element of research with children in similar circumstances. “Children are a vulnerable population, however, and so are accorded special protection from research risks,” (Online Ethics Center, n.d.). Yet, during the delicate time of post-trauma, many forget that involving children in expressive activities and research, or even questioning children about their well-being is grounds for reliving the events (Greig et al. 2007; Hurley et al. 2002; Meaux & Bell, 2001; Melton, 1980). Therefore, conditions that allow for research to be done with them should be determined by the social case workers, parents or legal guardians, and psychologists that have had time to assess the child’s psychological state. Such services did not exist at RV, and were much less feasible considering the immediate pressure from West Coast institution to start to collect data as soon as possible. Yet, as illustrated previously, in order to find out more about the readiness of children, we must gain accessibility and determine ethical timing for doing research with those affected.

When the goals of science and ethics appear to conflict, investigators studying vulnerable populations draw upon their own moral compass, the advice of colleagues, and recommendations of institutional review boards (IRBs) to make decisions about ethical procedures that will have immediate and possibly long-term impact on individual subjects, their families, and the communities they represent, (Fisher, 1997, p. 1).

The insistence to collect data came before any IRB was drafted. And since the communication between LSU and West Coast institution was at a stalemate, West Coast institution sent one of its graduate students who was also a Reading Specialist, Jane Sinsonte, to mitigate the situation. Upon her arrival, it quickly became apparent that she would have to be added to the DEP payroll as well as assume the position of the primary DEP coordinator, which had been my position

since April, 2006. However, since Jane had more experience with West Coast program and working abroad, I was happy to relinquish the role and serve as the second in command (Smolen, 2006). With her help, an IRB was drafted to conduct research at RV, consequently introducing both LSU volunteers and myself to the IRB process (see Appendix B). However, the question of when to conduct research with RV residents continued to be a point of contention. Whereas we, the DEP volunteers, determined that the RV children were not ready for such activity based on our previous attempts to solicit stories, Jane was convinced that this was an attempt to control the source of data. The relationship with Jane was off to a tough start.

Meanwhile, more meetings ensued with BRAF and its partners to determine and prepare for the fall semester if and when the course would take place. It was agreed upon to use the library trailer as a site for LSU's class to conduct its lab. Coordinating the times of operations suitable for all took almost two weeks, but we finally reached a reluctant agreement.

- Before 4 pm. Mentors strategy session.
- 4 pm to 4:30 pm. Homework time. *Pay each student completing homework with a "Brain Buck" that they can use to pay for snacks.*
- 4:30 to 4:45 pm. Snack time. *Students who have completed their homework and have earned a brain buck may "spend" their earnings for a snack to be finished by 4:45*
- 4:45 pm to 5:50 pm. Game time. *Mentors engage 3-4 students to play educational games. (Games should be varied from day to day with some type of educational goal in mind) Mentors should try to notice natural groupings and take advantage of them.*
- 5:50 to 6 pm. Finish up clean up and straighten up.
- 6:00 pm. Students leave, mentors record progress and discuss problems and suggestions.
- 6:15 pm. Mentors leave, (Cowsar, 2006).

The attempt to provide structure to the future program was going to provide a challenge considering the open door policy and free activity choice forms of operating that we were practice at the time. However, Thomas was excited to be able to finally have access to the two computers installed in the library. Crafting potential activities presented no problem for Thomas or Jetson, who had already prepared a list. However, West Coast institution insisted on conducting activities that originated only from their West Coast program website, as to provide consistency of operation when students from both institutions will be discussing their experiences. Our task became to familiarize ourselves with their website and all of their resources. For our near future, we would be asked to conduct reading assessments for all the DEP participants. The preparations of curriculum for the fall semester course continued. Despite our attempts to add more local flavor to their resources, West Coast institution seemed to baste in their own smorgasbord of plain activities. With minimal support from LSU administration at the time, we agreed to all changes.

The fall semester started with its usual fanfare of students bustling around campus, older students, able to spot the lost freshmen, continuously helped to direct them into their appropriate buildings and classrooms. The COE building was equally buzzing with commotion. This time it was Thomas, Jetson, and I who felt the nerves more than before, as we were going to be assisting in a class. I was assigned as the official graduate student to the course, while Thomas and Jetson were the RV site coordinators who would supervise the students while at the site (Jetson, 2006; Thomas, 2006). The professors assigned to the course, were the same one that helped set up DEP and Sinsonte. The dual instructorship was to provide a defined link between the two institutions. The drafted syllabus included all readings from West Coast institution 's Anthropology course, which was linked to West Coast program (see Appendix C), though all reading material was to

be adapted to Louisiana during class discussions. In the meantime it was up to me to conduct all orientations regarding RV (Smolen, 2006). In the end, our first class consisted of 15 LSU students, most of whom were from New Orleans or surrounding areas. Because the course was an elective students from various departments joined its ranks, allowing for various perspectives to be added to the class discussions. The beginning of the semester looked promising.

As school started an increasing amount of meetings were being organized with BRAF and especially LC staff. We were informed that the Big Buddy program as well as City Year would begin working at RV. In the effort to build strong education support team for the children at RV, all parties would have to share responsibilities and try not step on each other's toes. LC seemed to take charge in coordinating all parties involved (Smolen, 2006). The main person in charge was Margaret Renardt. Having been allotted the 4 to 6 pm slot, our plans to provide a list of students going to RV at that time every day of the week began on the first day of class. However, as meetings with other organizations continued, it was becoming clear that our role as LSU was becoming diminished. Having expressed my concerns to the Dean, who was, at the moment, the person to who I was to report to after Sinsonte, about being pushed aside in the planning process, and not well as having the flexibility to allow our students to explore their ideas at the site, I was assured that all would be resolved in due time. It was clear that the Dean had spoken with Sinsonte, since her demeanor toward our team and students quickly changed from placid to impatient (Smolen, 2006).

The education program at RV was divided into two parts: one for elementary students, and the other for young adults. Groups were placed under two coordinators from LC, Ms. Cecilia for the younger children and Ms. Amber for the young adults. Any and all decisions were still being made by Renardt, even the decision of who was let in and out of the library trailer. Having

divided the LSU course students into two groups so that all could participate in both sections, it quickly became apparent to the students themselves that they were only allowed to talk to the RV children about school and nothing else. All conversations beyond school were none of their concern since it did not help in the kids' education process (Jetson, 2006; Smolen, 2006). When the students brought this concern to class, Sinsonte informed them that they were ungrateful for such an opportunity shouldn't be and now complaining that they don't approve of how programs are run. Students were encouraged to drop the class if they did not agree with the decisions that were being made (Smolen, 2006). None of the students dropped the class. The LSU professor was absent most of the time, leaving me to witness the embarrassment and feel powerless to do anything in defense. After one class had ended, I expressed my concerns as well as suggested more flexibility for our students to interact with the RV children in a more informal manner, however I was met with the response that my arguments and pleas are moot and are a waste of time (Smolen, 2006).

By the time October came around the LSU students still had limited access to the RV children, but with Halloween fast approaching all conversations at the library trailer always returned to the promise of festivities. The most prominent topic that circulated was the fact that last year (2005), due to Katrina, they did not get a chance to celebrate the holiday. The LSU students discussed the issue with Thomas and Jetson, who passed on the message to Sinsonte and me, as to wanting to organize something for that day. Sinsonte quickly stifled the idea by insisting that reading assessments were more important than filling children with candy, and therefore if we wanted to organize something it would have to be on our own time, beyond all programming (Smolen, 2006). The students asked the LC coordinators if they objected to the idea, both of whom responded simultaneously to Sinsonte; as long as it didn't interfere with

education programming and was done on their own time it would be acceptable (Jetson, 2006). Thomas and Jetson further asked the Big Buddy and City Year staff if they wanted to join in the preparations for a potential event, both of whom agreed immediately. LSU students began planning and bought all supplies. In the end, an event called Trunk or Treat was organized. The students parked their cars on the basketball court, trunks facing inwards where each trunk consisted of a different activity. One trunk had a photo booth, another picture frame making, another a Mad Libs activity, another face painting, etc. RV children and parents, who did not have the ability to buy costumes for the holiday, had an opportunity to make masks, have their faces painted after their favorite characters etc. All activities were accompanied by small amounts of candy and school supplies. City Year and Big Buddy helped to arrange and decorate treat bags and helped coordinate the sequence of activities. Over 40 children and several more parents showed up to partake in the activities. The FEMA security guards lit up the basketball court and helped manage any rowdy behavior.

Much to Renards's and Sinsonte's dismay, a news crew and reporters showed up to cover the story (Janes, 2006) Upon seeing Jetson and myself talking to reporters, they were quick to step in to assure the public that they were the ones responsible for organizing the event. However, upon finishing interviews with LSU students, it became clear to the reporters who really did all the work based on students' feedback and knowledge of the DEP. The event was a huge success. However, the following day Sinsonte contacted the COE's Dean to say that she no longer would work with LSU, since the staff and students had no respect for authority and dismissed all of her attempts to run DEP (Smolen, 2006). As of November 2006, the course had no instructor left other than myself. Assuming the leadership position, I implemented more flexible plans for final projects. Together with Thomas and Jetson, I relied on my emerging

bricoleur skills and developed educational activities for college students as well. In the end, reflective projects were asked of students. Furthermore, the LC staff's relationship also became glacial. An increasing amount of accusatory emails began to fill the virtual space. West Coast institution, having heard from Sinsonte, also sided with LC staff, making LSU DEP team seem to be the guilty party and rebel (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2006). Cowsar, who stayed in the background and still served in a helping capacity as another tutor, defended DEP and its intentions and actions; consequently, after the conversations, he was reassigned to a janitorial position at the program, with an LC approved broom (Smolen, 2006). The semester spiraled onward and downward with turmoil between RV staff and LSU. It was serendipitous that we finally got word that Rosie O'Donnell's facilities were finally being opened at the beginning of November. This event marked a transition point as well as a turning point in what DEP was about to become.

However, before venturing further into the next stage of DEP's metamorphosis, it is valuable to take a deeper look into DEP's coordinators' perceptions on this particular stage. Having distanced themselves from DEP and RV, they had time to reflect on past events as well as the programming that was conducted. Therefore, the next section will discuss their direct responses to research questions pertaining to this study.

Despite having contacted previous service providers, such as Sister Judith Brun, City Year staff and Cowsar, who worked at RV during the time of DEP, none have responded to the requests for an interview. However, the DEP coordinators who helped to create and run activities in the first half of DEP's existence responded and provided insight to the events that transpired and their perceptions on the effectiveness of the programming. One of the coordinators was a graduate student, Sharon Thomas (pseudonym), in the Educational Technology program. Having

been asked by the professor who was heading DEP efforts to join and assist in the development and running of the program, she gladly agreed. Being a veteran teacher in public schools made her an ideal person to provide constructive suggestions as to what an educational program could become. The second coordinator, Emma Jetson (pseudonym), started as one of the volunteers in the initial group at RV; within the first few months, she exhibited amazing organizational skills, creativity, and leadership. While Thomas grew up mostly in Louisiana, Jetson is a proud New Orleanian. It was important for both of these women to be able to help those affected by Katrina. Their combined background, knowledge of locale and its ways, and skill sets were a tremendous asset. Furthermore, both participants helped establish DEP and therefore provide a unique insight into the creation stages of DEP. Therefore, I elected to use their interviews to further describe and analyze the first phase of DEP whether culturally relevant practices were present and if they contributed to DEP's survival at RV.

In order to understand the setting accordingly, a few elements need to be clarified. At the time of recruitment into DEP's ranks, Jetson, Thomas, and I were all enrolled at LSU. However, courses being suspended allowed more time to be dedicated to planning goals and objectives for DEP. This was the time when the partnership between LSU COE and Major West Coast institution began to bloom. To reiterate, the majority of the time would be spent on creating digital stories in an effort to provide therapeutic outlet for children. With that in mind, the coordinators' perspectives on DEP as an oeuvre started with the first trip to RV.

First Impressions

Considering that both coordinators came from Louisiana, it is helpful to gain their comparative view on the differences that exist between what normally exists in Louisiana as far as living conditions and RV site. Being an international student, it was hard for me to initially

distinguish what normally occurred after a hurricane, and since both Thomas and Jetson had lived through multiple storms, it only seems appropriate to seek their perspectives. Upon arriving at RV, both coordinators indicated that the site and circumstances surrounding the facilities were out of the ordinary (Jetson, 2006; Thomas, 2006). One of the first things that struck them as most unusual was the austere atmosphere that welcomed them upon passing through the security gates. The following epitomized their views of RV:

It looked pretty bleak and everything looked white. So coming from New Orleans where everything was grey, this was where everything was white: the trailers were white, the ground was with white shells, the tent was white, the tables were white, everything was white, except the people. It was just kind of grim. It almost looked like army housing in a sense where everything was all one color, but it was just grim, (Jetson, 2011).

When people were finally allowed to drive back to New Orleans, Jetson went with her family to inspect their family home. Upon returning back to Baton Rouge, she remarked how all of her neighborhood houses and stores were molding and everything was quickly rotting away (Jetson, 2006). Consequently most of the colors from her neighborhood were turning from various shades of yellows, blues and greens to a communal shade of grayish mold, hence the reference in her response above. Thomas, on the other hand, looked more toward personal and emotional side of RV. Thomas said:

I felt a sadness because of the way the families had to live in those small trailers and yet, I felt they were blessed because they had a roof over their heads, they have food, and an opportunity to do something with themselves. I thought that it was dusty and...just a moment of sadness that it had come to that for those people. And yet, it was a great...and thankfulness that they were alive and that they were able to have a life, (Thomas, 2011).

The knowledge that all the individuals that found themselves relocated within the fenced outlines of RV were those who also had lost everything evoked a feeling of empathy within the entire DEP team. Moreover, perceiving the site as a ‘blessing’ was something that only few admitted at

the time since most focused on the immediate ascetic surrounding us, resembling that of a prison and the rigorous relationship between FEMA and the residents. The optimistic view on RV residents' situation was an uncommon however it did provide an alternative way of looking at the residents themselves as well. The initial group of DEP had a chance to talk more extensively in an informal setting with the residents than any other group. This included community members, parents and children.

They were interesting characters. I remember...Michaela [pseudonym]...no it was another girl, she was about 8, I don't remember her name, I remember it rained one time and it was kind of flooding, not really flooding but like 3 inches of rain water on the shelly nasty ground and she was running in the rain going 'It's Katrina! It's Katrina.' So you just know that tragedy hit them and they were dealing with it (Jetson, 2011).

In the first few weeks of DEP's operation, many similar stories were related. For example, in early May 2006, Cowsar arrived at the tent at the usual time with a somber look upon his face. When asked what had happened, he related that he just met a grandmother in tears because her grandchild who had mental disabilities refused to shower, bathe, drink water, have anything to do with water because everything reminded the child of Katrina and was now so severely traumatized that it was impossible to even properly hydrate the child (Smolen, 2006). With no mental health services at RV in the duration of RV's existence, the majority of the population did not receive the services that they truly needed. However, the reaction to our presence as another set of service providers was appreciated, though met with suspicion and hope.

I got the impression that they were thankful we were there, and hoped that it would last for a long period...that it wouldn't be a come and go thing, they wanted the stability, fun thing, 'cause I remember the cameras and all, walking around with cameras and taking pictures at first just for fun, (Thomas, 2011).

As mentioned before, the first meeting held in the tent included activities for children with digital cameras as a way to gain their trust and determine their interests. It was also during that meeting

that parents related their expectations for our program as to include their input into the official programming. Retrospectively, several residents adamantly reinforced their identity as being from New Orleans and not fitting in with the Baton Rouge folks from the very beginning (Smolen, 2006). Going through the struggle to fit into their new circumstance proved to be difficult for some. Therefore the coordinators' depiction of cultural elements within RV and in some of DEP's planning elements of New Orleans culture could be spotted.

Cultural Elements at RV

In early days of May, Sister Judith Brun, still working for BRAF, solicited support for an event-size tent to be provided and installed at RV. This was done in the effort to provide more shade for the upcoming months of summer, and as a place for RV residents to gather (Smolen, 2006). Having won the fierce battle with FEMA by ensuring them that tents are temporary fixtures, the tent was installed and provided more space for communal activities to be conducted. The small tent was relinquished to us for permanent use.

Well, I remember how they got together for church and for meetings in that big white tent, they would have gatherings, yeah, how they all got together and share faith and stories. And there was this old lady, 98 or something like that, who everybody loved and she was always out telling stories. And then once the Rosie O'Donnell facility came in, it seemed like that became the gathering place, which was a lot nicer because it had color other than white, and it had air conditioning and walls, walls were good (Jetson, 2011).

Implementing any forms of cultural elements was a struggle for the residents. As mentioned previously, FEMA resisted having any church groups come on to RV premises due to the issue of separation of church and state, since RV was considered federal grounds (Singer, 2006). Faith is an integral part of life for most in the South, and in particular, appeared to be crucial to those who populated RV. In essence, not being allowed to practice faith was detrimental to residents' recovery from trauma. So when Sister Brun installed the tent and sign-up sheets were

implemented, regular groups of church goers began to emerge and sense of community began to grow (Smolen, 2006). One of the examples that Jetson mentioned included the intergenerational storytelling time. As time went by not only did various church groups emerge but also RV Counsel and other organized groups, which acted on behalf of RV residents when issues arose or a mediating body was needed to discuss FEMA's decisions and how they would affect the residents (Smolen, 2007). These groups used the large white tent for all meetings. That was the place, as one of RV children described, "where the grown ups go and talk" (Smolen, 2007). Setting DEP in the other tent allowed for a more quiet and less interrupted environment but still filled with meaningful conversations and equal storytelling time.

Cultural Elements in DEP

The preliminary activities did not hold culture as their focus, rather, they were based on an interest inventory compiled by the coordinators and LSU volunteers. Overtime more specific activities were attempted, sometimes with success and other times with failure.

There were cultural elements that we tried to bring in, I remember we brought and included some of New Orleans history, where they were from, we would show them and help them make booklets with pictures of what happened and have them...but that's not really culture. I remember putting in music and Tommy [Cowsar] would bring a radio and...as far as focusing on their culture of music, we didn't really focus on that much, I honestly don't remember focusing on their culture. But I think the program was more focused on not on culture but healing from what happened to them and to help them get out of the depressed state that they were in. And them wanting to go home, I think we brought with us a lot of things from their home and let them talk to us. I think it was more of a social need...it was more therapeutic (Thomas, 2011).

The idea of an educational program serving as a form of therapy was novel to me. Though I was familiar with education assisting in bring in sense of normalcy to a community (Kagawa, 2002), the idea that the program itself could serve as in a healing capacity was an interesting tenet to consider. Jetson went on to bolster that argument as well.

Well, I know we tried to hit [target] the kids where they were in so whatever they were interested in; I wouldn't say we included too much culture. We had a lot of arts and crafts projects, thought we were more giving the kids an outlet, a way to express themselves whether about Katrina or about whatever they were interested in. We gave them a place and hopefully that became part of their culture and their lives there at Renaissance Village. Not sure if anything stuck with them, hopefully it did but we'll probably we'll never know, (Jetson, 2011).

Following West Coast institution's idea of providing DEP participants with a form of expression and an outlet for their emotional states, in that aspect DEP clearly fulfilled its mission. Though it did not consist of technological elements, using readily available materials that DEP provided, the residents were able to gradually express themselves; thus acting as their own forms of bricoleurs for their own healing processes. Furthermore, DEP volunteers themselves acted as bricoleurs when planning and creating activities that were adapted to current circumstances with a limited amount of resources. Having both coordinators depict similar conclusion as to the impact of DEP and its purpose in its initial stages buttresses the bricoleur's idea of adaptability and creativity. However, the cultural element did not emerge as to being the focal points or as prominently featured as expected, yet they were present.

Meanwhile as the relationship deepened and grew between RV residents and DEP, casual and formal conversations continued as to what the residents wanted from DEP. During that time several topics featured as important to them. Though some of the topics were not registered in coordinators' field notes from 2006, during the interview process already mentioned new topics emerged.

Frequently Discussed Topics

After several visits and extensive discussions with RV residents it became clear that a difference existed between what RV parents were concerned about and what was important to the RV children. The adults had a more extensive list of trepidations that spread beyond the

means and mission of DEP. Being newly moved to RV and still adjusting to their circumstances their list of needs and hopes were a lot longer.

Topics Important to RV Parents

Learning new forms of dealing with new organizations and various bodies that never existed before in their lives, and learning how to maneuver while not overstepping any imaginary line of impoliteness proved to be a challenge for many RV residents.

I remember they [adults] were telling their kids not to beg for stuff. They didn't want their kids taking lots of hand outs, like when we brought juice and snacks, there were a lot of parents who didn't want their kids to take any because they considered it begging (Jetson, 2011).

The discussions on what was considered appropriate behavior at this time of continued crisis was a debate that continued throughout our initial weeks of operations at RV and talks with parents. They admitted that working with organizations such as Big Buddy or even Red Cross was unheard of in their lives pre-Katrina (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2007). Furthermore, knowing how to talk to these entities was an even bigger issue. For some, seeking help from these organizations was futile since they did not know how to talk to them without a feeling of condescension and pontification (Smolen, 2006). There is no clear indication whether the type of treatment received by the RV residents was intertwined with such reactions from other service providers, however several parents on many occasions alluded, in their anecdotes, to this type of treatment over the course of RV's existence. However, when discussing educational issues in the lives of their children, their concerns were more structured and clear. "I remember that very first meeting with parents. They were mainly concerned with their kids and them being behind in school. I remember them kind of being worried about snacks and the activities we were going to do," (Thomas, 2011). The apprehension about our intentions, especially the timeline within

which we were going to complete DEP's mission, continued to be a repeated topic throughout the first seven months.

Topics Important to RV Children

The RV children, on the other hand, had a completely different set of concerns. These concerns were either discussed or addressed. The topics became more convoluted as time went by. After the initial meetings and our first weeks of operations, the children were more interested in determining if our intention was to stay for the long haul. In the midst of instability and chaos, it was the children that sought stable relationships and were attempting to bring order to their young lives.

I think basically they were more interested in the snacks, the kids were. I think I remember a few students who would come in, sit down, and welcome me. I'm talking about the very first meeting when we were in the tent, before the Rosie O'Donnell era. I think there were a handful of students that just love to come but then there were a handful who came just for the snacks to get out of the trailer, to see what we had in store for them that day (Thomas, 2011).

The issue of snacks provided an incentive for many children to come in and see what our program had to offer. However, after several visits the issue of snacks started to become a point of contention of their presence at the tent and them taking advantage of our resources. Yet for some of the younger children, the snack was one of the few food supplements that they received throughout the day, whereas the teenage kids turned the situation into a game and tried to work out our programmatic changes that would reward them with a snack. In the end, the issue was resolved by sign-up sheets. Participants had to sign up for the extent of the program to receive any snacks. The RV parents were extremely helpful in this process (Smolen, 2006; Thomas, 2006, 2011). Nonetheless

snacks were not the only important issue that was discussed. When trying to determine their emotional state and attempt to address their ways of dealing with post-Katrina events, the children were less forthcoming.

Well they were interested in anything that we brought, it wasn't like that they expressed emotion and didn't want to talk too much about the hurricane really. We tried doing the digital stories telling and they were still kids and so they were more interested in coloring butterflies and creating puppets really, I remember our first digital story was about a spider that someone had actually created and it went on people's heads and they all helped tell a story about it [Katrina]. And only now and then Katrina would come up about how they lost something but they still acted like kids, like most kids do, (Jetson, 2011).

As time went on and our relationship and trust with RV children kept growing, more pertinent topics began to emerge. Having Cowsar as the intermediary between DEP and the RV residents, bolstered our attempts to produce more meaningful relationships. With his help, several of the younger kids and teenagers began admitting to having difficulties at local schools.

I can remember Tommy [Cowsar] telling us about the difficulties and students having trouble adjusting to the school, that it was such a different way for them to be taught and I think the level for them was very high for the students from New Orleans. The expectations were higher; I think they were more advanced in Baker than they were in New Orleans (Thomas, 2011).

According to the RV kids, Baker schools had more structured activities and teachers were following previously agreed upon consequences (Smolen, 2006). This element seemed new to them. Further, because they came from RV and New Orleans, many kids became victims of taunting by local children. Consequently, many were expelled when they addressed taunting with fists fights and vulgarities.

I remember a couple of the boys that were getting into a lot of trouble, always expelled and sent home, and I'm not sure, but according to Tommy they were being bullied at a point that they were reacting to people making fun of them because of their accent etc. And I do remember several students that they had that issue with (Thomas, 2011).

This was also the time where the 504 versus 225 area code mentalities began to emerge as well. With the new school year of 2006-2007, the RV children already had their fate sealed by being marked as 504s, the area code for New Orleans' residents versus 225 as being the area code for Baton Rougeans, making them denoted as being different and outsiders. Their educational experiences were about to get a lot more difficult. With a sense of trepidation in mind, the 2006 summer planning was designed to prevent RV kids from falling further behind and prevent the local children from academic mocking.

Culturally Responsive

Though cultural response did not feature as a direct form of intentional response in our planning or executing the pre-planned activities, such practices emerged organically.

In the sense that we gave them a place to gather and that's part of their culture, gathering and sharing, it fit that part of culture. It gave a place for the kids to do that. It gave the parents a place to gather and talk and an easy of mind knowing that their kids were being looked after or involved in something, (Jetson, 2011).

Though a place to gather might not appear as an indicative element, it was a significant addition to replicating the cultural practice of having a safe space where stories and worries could be related. Moreover, it was significant in replicating sense of "home," practices that were commonplace in New Orleans were finally visible at RV. If such a space did not exist, DEP would not be able to gather data and obtain guidance on what the RV residents needed or wanted. Considering that West Coast institution also pressed DEP staff to create digital stories, it was necessary to develop a safe environment where storytelling could take place. In that aspect, DEP acted in a culturally responsive manner. Furthermore, the concept of responsiveness did not only correspond to RV children and parents but also applied to DEP staff and the coordinators themselves. Retrospectively Jetson admitted to where cultural responsiveness applied to her as well.

And I can tell that it even helps now in teaching [Jetson is a full time teacher in Baton Rouge school system]. Kids that are from New Orleans, they identify with New Orleans and I totally understand that 'cause I identify with New Orleans. I remember them talking about 504; and after Hurricane Katrina the 504 and 225 was a big deal on the streets; that being their area code numbers. And them knowing that I was a 504, they would say 'hey girl, you're a 504' or something like that, and I think that helped them realize that I wasn't an outsider, I was someone who had been through similar to them and shared similar experiences to them and I think that helped to relate to...at least to be more trusting. Because so many people have come and gone, and programs have come and gone at Renaissance Village, I would assume that helped them be more trusting and more willing to talk about things with someone who got out, even though our experiences were way different we had some communalities [such as] New Orleans and identifying it with home and knowing right now that home was a place where none of us could go and feeling that...kind of lost in the sense of home. Where was home? Umm my parents were living with my aunt in a travel trailer, much nicer than the FEMA trailer, my aunt's personal travel trailer in her driveway, and knowing I can't come visit my parents and things like that. And knowing that they can't go home, a place that they were used to or comfortable with, even if it was awful it was still home. [Together] we were the lost boys (Jetson, 2011).

As mentioned before, the fact that most of the DEP staff were from Louisiana and many from New Orleans, helped the DEP team in developing trust. This particular element was difficult to attain by many other organizations whose staff did not come from Louisiana, and which caused DEP an extensive amount of time to achieve. Having other New Orleanians on staff, sped the process and through mutual storytelling, RV participants realized that even though they had nowhere to go it didn't mean they had to be alone (Jetson, 2006, 2011). Thinking about Katrina and the types of effects it had on individuals and the program itself brought mixed, often difficult, feelings to the coordinators. When asked whether their perceptions have changed regarding Katrina working with DEP at RV, unexpected answers were provided.

Perceptions of Katrina

“Well, actually, I try not to think about it too often. I'm one of those people who pushes out things out of my head that they don't want there...It [the feeling of dread and disaster]

doesn't go away, it keeps lingering through years," (Jetson, 2011). Throughout the interview process Jetson admitted to having difficulty discussing some of the subjects at hand. It was obvious that Jetson was still struggling to process her emotional trauma from her experiences in 2005. Further, she did not believe she could completely resolve her emotional state considering that she continued to contact evacuee families and teach evacuee children.

Well, considering that I still teach in Baton Rouge and there's a lot of people still here that evacuated and are still trying to go home, I feel like I'm still almost there, like everybody there was trying to go home and now I have kids whose parents are trying to move home still. So Katrina is not over. It's still affecting people everywhere. I was talking to one of my kids, one of my students, and they were talking about their family coming in from Utah, and I was like 'oh did you used to live in Utah?' and they were like 'no, they moved there after Katrina and we haven't seen them since then,' So I said, 'wow, well that's exciting that they're coming in'; 'yeah, and they're trying to move back', 'ok.' So the reality of that and the truth in that, it's hard to take in, (Jetson, 2011).

Constantly living with reminders of the catastrophic event and visualizing the disaster through the eyes of children, would provide a challenge for anyone. Having such contact for the past six years is bound to affect individuals. Thomas, on the other hand, provided a more pragmatic perspective to the issue. Being a veteran teacher, mother, and mentor, she always tried to gather lessons from any experience at hand. With that in mind, she admitted that she did not change her perception of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. According to Thomas, Katrina was:

Very unorganized. My perception of Katrina was that it was all done wrong, and I hope that everyone has learnt lessons from what happened. Delta Express was, in my opinion, done incorrectly from the beginning and we should take a lesson, and if there's another tragic situation like Katrina and let it [program] grow instead of doing the same cycle over again (Thomas, 2011).

Thomas initially referred to government response as being inefficient when it came to the evacuees and managing the entire disaster site. However, a more extensive analysis was provided on what DEP *should* have done as far as the potential that it held. For Thomas, DEP mirrored

Katrina in many aspects, as far as having another institution dictating an agenda while realities on site were incompatible with what the expectations were (Thomas, 2011). In the end, providing services dictated by RV residents for a certain amount of time (until Rosie O'Donnell facilities opened) produced better results as far as building a foundation for future programming and serviced DEP more favorably as opposed to following a stringent agenda from those not familiar to Louisiana, particularly New Orleans culture and with agendas not shared by RV residents (Thomas, 2011). However, lessons from DEP and the site were more extensive than that.

Lessons from DEP

The primary success of DEP was in its consistency. None of the programming could have been conducted or completed without fulfilling the expectation that DEP would show up at a designated day and time. When asked why DEP survived for such an extensive period of time despite the programmatic shortcomings? Jetson replied:

Because we showed up consistently. And we came, we came with smiles on and we were ready for whatever. I don't think there was ever a time where we didn't show up. You know, every time we said that we were going to be there, we were there, so it became a trust thing. Other programs would be there one Saturday out of a month, but we were...at one point we were going there every afternoon in the summer with Jane and Lamia [pseudonyms, West Coast institution summer student volunteers] when they were in town. We were going every afternoon. And I think it's just the consistency that helped people trust us, and they kept coming to us and I think we became kind of a staple, I think. We kind of took over the white tent and that's what they expected to be there (2011).

Once again, the issue of trust emerges as an element that was allotted to the success of DEP.

With that in mind, Jetson suggested other elements that could have served as improvements to general planning:

You know, being a teacher now I know what schools are like all day for the kids and how rigorous it is, I wouldn't recommend that we would have done educational lesson plans with objectives based on GLEs or anything like that. I think the kids needed a break and that they needed a place. More than anything they needed a place to feel comfortable and have something

to do, I think we could have been more structured and organized in terms of what we were doing, but at the time we did pretty well for what we had and what we were doing, we had our box of supplies and we got out there and did whatever we could. I think structure and a discipline plan would have been helpful as a way to deal with that and probably more, better experienced people, (Jetson, 2011).

Attesting to the adaptive nature of DEP to the uncertain RV and inter-university environment, and being able to operate within those conditions only affirms the necessity for bricoleur to come to the forefront of this study. However, this was not always done successfully, especially when lines of communication were not always open. “I don’t think people listened to what we had to say,” (Thomas, 2011). Referring to West Coast institution and LSU administrators and professors who rarely visited RV site, Thomas related her disappointment and failure in the overall planning structure of DEP. Most of all, the West Coast institution staff did not respond or did not trust DEP staff’s reports on circumstances, thus making the relationship strained. As I reflect on these competing agendas, it became clear that the efforts were never focused on those who needed the program the most, the RV residents and their children.

West Coast Connections

At the time, Thomas and I were the only students from LSU who were included more intimately in the DEP development process. From the very beginning of our involvement we were expected to provide all sides, LSU and major West Coast institution, with reports and field notes of what was taking place at RV. With that in mind, further DEP planning could take place. However the realities of such practices resemble that of a holographic image, with one side being the intended set of events and results, yet with changing the angle of perspective a new, more complicated image appears. With a clear lack of support from various parties on both sides, the DEP structure and objectives were constantly morphed and revamped, an elusive and changing target, to the point where mistrust dominated the entire background. These changes were often

elusive. According to Thomas and Jetson, one of the main causes of disorganization between the institutions were leadership issues coming from both LSU and major West Coast institution (2011).

The top leadership not giving the people on the ground, they would give the permission for them to do whatever they needed to do on the ground but yet they would tie my hands, they tied your hands, they tied everybody's hands and, you know, we would say 'well this is what's going on we've got to correct what's going but we couldn't; like everyone could come in whenever they want [RV children], the money that was wasted. There was a lot of planning that needed to be done, they shouldn't have opened it up like that [the program having open door policy contributed to an undefined number of participants for a long time], like 'ok we're going to get out there next week and here it is and go with it.' The transportation of everything back and forth [supply boxes with teaching materials], it was just unfeasible, (Thomas, 2011).

Rethinking the intra-university partnership, whether it was a good idea for such a project to be conducted with cross-country partners, both coordinators agreed that developing such partnerships could serve as an asset; however, the circumstances that we were working with demanded a more stable relationship as opposed to trying out something new (Jetson, 2011; Thomas, 2011).

I thought they had a good partnership in the beginning and I think they had the same vision as to what they wanted to achieve but it was the manner but they weren't on the ground enough... I don't think they were in the trenches, they've been out of the trenches too long, they didn't understand that you just can't go in there and let things happen that way, it's just not feasible. It just was... haphazard. From the facilities, the parental help, to not enough time to plan to the activities, it was all just very haphazard. And then putting in 'oh we want to do a fieldtrip' and all of a sudden we're doing a fieldtrip - ok, where do we take them, what do you want to accomplish, who are you allowing to go, is it anybody can go; it was very... it just was very difficult to work with (Thomas, 2011).

The disparity and miscommunication between those on top and bottom in the organizational structure is not a novel observation when looking through organizational development literature. Further the observation of those "in the trenches" who are not understood by those on top, is also

a common complaint in the school settings. In most cases, top-down policies are crafted by those in high administrative posts and are meant to be implemented at the bottom levels; however, they fail to consider the local circumstances, and thus place blame on those on the bottom for failing to fulfill the agenda. In DEP's circumstance, the confusion between the realities at RV and what administrators expected grew into a bigger aperture.

Well, I'm not sure that we did what Major West Coast institution was expecting us to do to be honest, and I think about this a lot because I still am not sure that I understand what I was supposed to write in my field notes, not sure how to go from the big picture in describing to the moment in my descriptions of the environment. So I'm not sure that they got from us what they wanted, but I wasn't involved too much in the actual discussions of the outcomes and expectations between Major West Coast institution and LSU, I was more on the end of providing field notes and entertaining them when they came to town...But I consider myself lucky not to be involved in those conversations, I think it's better that way (Jetson, 2011).

Upon seeing the extent of frustration that both Thomas and I experienced, Jetson realized that not being included in many of the conversations between parties was a positive aspect. However, upon becoming an official site coordinator her involvement increased and she participated in these meetings as well. Upon Jetson's realization that Major West Coast institution's expectations did not meet the realities of the site, she too questioned the efficacy of the partnership (Jetson, 2011). "I feel we had our hands tied at all times, I feel like we were fighting a losing battle," (Thomas, 2011).

Any attempt made on Thomas's, Jetson's, or my part to indicate the impossibility of the single-minded task that Major West Coast institution or LSU wanted us to do, was met with apprehensive acknowledgement and exaggerating the difficulties that we faced (Smolen, 2006). Consequently, this rendered an image of us as being weak and unable to fulfill the agenda (Smolen, 2006); however, having no one else to rely on, Major West Coast institution sent their own students to conduct reconnaissance missions while inconspicuously helping DEP. No one

was fooled. Their intentions and manner of approach to the issue was transparent to all parties involved. This too contributed to the difficult relationship. Despite those elements and the impact of chaos on chaos, DEP continued to operate.

Improvements

When asked about immediate improvements that could have been made to the program that could have ameliorated the overwrought relationship between universities but mostly DEP's effectiveness on site, Thomas provided the most poignant observation.

I think that if it had been [with perfect conditions and circumstances], it probably would not have been on such a huge scale. From the beginning, if it had taken a smaller scale and focused on getting specific children that anyone could sign up and talk with them 'what do you want, what are your needs' and focusing on specific activities for those students, bringing them more culture or whatever...I think it was just too big of a scale to do what we wanted to do with just four tutors going out there and us three, you know you, Emma, and myself. It was too big, it was way too big for the amount of people that we had to help and the activities were...it just didn't work, (Thomas, 2011).

Though the initial interest inventory was gathered in a form that Thomas mentioned above, the follow-up activities did not always emerge. Consistent with Major West Coast institution and LSU's instructions, any child can come in and go as they please, making the program more open and flexible to their needs (Smolen, 2006). In truth, this created a significant challenge to conduct any long term projects since there was no assurance that any of the RV students would return or that we were able to keep up with particular student's progress throughout the summer or any period of time afterwards. While I perceived this as accurate given that many RV residents tried to leave and resettle in more permanent housing. With that in mind, discipline was a constant struggle. The lax atmosphere gave false illusions of informality. Participants believed that they were allowed to do whatever they pleased. With parental help, many of the issues were

abated but were never completely extinguished due to the open tent-flap policy.

Oh under the circumstances, I definitely think it shouldn't have been where you just come-in-if-you-want kind of program, but should have been more structured program but they [Major West Coast institution and LSU administrators] did not want to deny any children from coming in; it was the discipline that really tied my hands, tied everybody's hands. The discipline was very...they tried to do the discipline in Rosie's buildings; I'm referring to as long as I was out there, but especially about the tent. I think if it has started off differently instead of where you could come and go but had like a pass or something to come in. It was the behavior that had to be under control, (Thomas, 2011).

Another element depicted by Thomas was the organization of DEP itself. Coming from the structured environment of a school system and having taught for over 10 years, Thomas faced the an extremely informal structure that DEP was, proved to be both a professional and personal challenge.

The planning shouldn't be done at a meeting at a restaurant and giving people the impression that it was going to be easy and everyone's welcome and everyone should be welcome but they shouldn't...it just has to be more organized and the planning of it needed to be better defined and expectations...(Thomas, 2011).

Though I would argue that planning at restaurants was not a significant point of contention considering the limited amount of space available in Baton Rouge at the time, Thomas's argument for more defined parameters for participants was a valid point. During the course of that summer, there were RV children who would participate up to six times in a row, then all of a sudden disappear, and later reemerged months later and expected to pick up their projects where they left off. The limited amount of follow-ups that were conducted on our part did contribute to the 'haphazard' nature of the program. Yet, as Thomas pointed out, our hands were tied at all times; any suggestion for change at the universities' level was an example of Dadaist oeuvre, simple in nature yet fatalist in execution. As I reflect, somehow someone should have anticipated the need for fluidity in terms of programming.

However, as the new school year and semester began new changes were taking place. Moving the program site into the Rosie O'Donnell facilities provided a change in operations for all organizations that worked at RV. The move filled many with hope that things would improve, as per promises that were consistently made during the difficult months of summer in which struggle to provide quality activities. Whether things did get better, Thomas answered that:

Yes, to a certain extent, yes I think they did. They got better with the fact that at least we were in an air-conditioned facility, and materials were everywhere. And I did not, I didn't work out there...I didn't do almost any of the planning out there, I think someone else was...Big Buddy, City Year, and Literacy Coalition people...I thought that they were really trying, they were really focused and they had the facilities, again anybody could come and go and I know that's what we wanted to do but it was very difficult to do that, I think we had to have specific sign up, know exactly who's coming and going, know the plan...logistically it was better than the tent, yes, (Thomas, 2011).

Triptych Part Two - Turning Point

The following poem was written by Brenna Boudreau, an LSU student, as part of an EDUC 2000 course assignments where she was asked to freely describe what RV means to her. Boudreau was one of the few students who participated in DEP for an extended period of time, which is why I wanted to include her rendition of RV in this oeuvre.

Renaissance Village

(R)enaissance Village is something I will always remember...
It has the most (E)ntertaining children I have ever met.
It came from a (N)atural [*sic*] disaster that happened in New Orleans.
It has the most caring and (A)mazing staff I have ever had the
pleasure to work with.
(I) couldn't be prouder of these kids for keeping their [*sic*] heads held
high after everything they have been through
These kids are (S) students who really care to learn and want to
succeed in school and in life.
The (S)tories that I have heard from these kids will touch my heart
forever and make me live life differently.
(A)mazing and positive attitudes constantly
Getting the chance to tutor here has really shown me the hospitality
of Louisiana's (C)ulture.

Working with these kids has definitely been one of the most (E) motional things I have ever done in my life.

It has been (V)ery rewarding getting to learn so much from these children.

(I) would love to get to work here for years to come I hope they continue an after school program somewhere else

(L)iving so far away from their [*sic*] friends and family must be so hard. I hope one day they will be able to move back home and be with them again.

(L)earning life lessons from these kids has really touched me and helped me understand their [*sic*] feelings.

I am so (A) mazed by the parents that live there that work a ton and still have time to put their [*sic*] kids learning needs first. I am so thankful that they trust us enough to let us help their [*sic*] children grown.

I wish the (G)overnment would have done more to help these kids. I wish it wouldn't of taken them so long to get these kids an inside building with toys and books and supplies. It really angers me how much begging it took to get.

(E)is for energy I am so glad that people never gave up. I am so thankful that people kept pushing and punching [*sic*] to get these kids what they needed to learn and survive in America's standards. I am just glad that no one ever gave up they kept trying and trying. I am sure they are so thankful on how well it turned out and how much the kids have come to grow and learn, (Brenna Boudreau, Spring 2009).

The opening of Rosie O'Donnell's facilities provided everyone with joy. Not only would the children of RV have a new place to play and attend activities, the service providers finally had an air-conditioned place to hold these activities (Jetson, 2011; Thomas, 2011). The official opening took place at the very beginning of November 2006, thirteen months after the arrival of the classroom trailers to RV. Rosie O'Donnell's foundation finally won the battle with FEMA. In the end, her foundation was forced to rent space for the trailers from the federal government (Smolen, 2006). In October several visits were made by Rosie O'Donnell foundation staff to assess the condition of the trailers and begin their installations. After the events of Halloween, the only relationship that was strengthened between service providers was that of DEP and City Year. It was City Year who solicited help for the opening ceremony (Smolen, 2006). Their plea

did not go unanswered (Figure 11). With Rosie O'Donnell present, there was a lot of excitement in the air. After arriving at the big white tent, all DEP staff got official Delta Express t-shirts and helped distribute Rosie O'Donnell foundation's yellow shirts to all RV children. It was difficult to contain the excitement by all within the floppy walls of the tent. Everyone was ready to go to the back of RV and see the finished product. It was rumored that a designer had come to provide unique décor for the trailers (Smolen, 2006). Having a few art students within DEP's ranks provided everyone with even more excitement and intrigue of what types of designs would be featured. After a small orientation by foundation staff as to the schedule of the ceremony, everyone was told to follow City Year's instructions.



Figure 11. DEP and City Year Partnership

City Year divided DEP staff into groups to be in charge of several RV kids. In a fashionable order everyone made their way to the very back of RV where Rosie O'Donnell and a camera crew were waiting in front of the newly decorated area that resembled nothing else on site. The sudden breadth of color and opulence of design took everyone aback. As the afternoon rolled by and the sun began to set, the colors of the facilities were still shining bright. With the mixture of all primary colors and the reflection of the sun upon the new banisters, there was no sense of sunset or that it soon would be time to leave. In the emotional speech made by Rosie O'Donnell about her struggle to get things set up and the struggle that the evacuees had to constantly go

through, she hoped to provide a small glimmer of hope. Her dedication to this project stemmed from her life partner being from Baton Rouge, and felt the need to act rather than watch the situation idly from the comforts of her home (Smolen, 2006).

As she was talking, I fervently wrote as much as I could to remember those words. In comparison, many celebrities acted to help, but most of their assistance was short-lived or consisted of a one-time donation; whereas O'Donnell's donation provided an opportunity for services to grow. Her staff returned on several occasions to monitor how facilities were being used and what other equipment would be needed.



Figure 12. Opening Ceremony of Rosie O'Donnell Facilities

After all the speeches were made, everyone gathered were allowed to come, play, and explore the new installations. There were six classroom trailers total. Each one held two major classrooms with individual sinks, and a bathroom separating the two classrooms. Each classroom was equipped with a Promethean board, a smart board, with the newest accessories readily available. Together with a small group of RV children and DEP students, we entered the trailer we were to be stationed from now on. One of O'Donnell's staff was inside answering questions about the facilities. Upon seeing the Promethean board, all education students shrieked in excitement. Upon learning who we were, the staff member offered to come to LSU, to our class,

to provide a workshop on how to work with the board, and with all the accessories in the effort to maximize the use of the technology (Smolen, 2006). Later in the semester, Renard publicly reprimanded me for communicating with Rosie O'Donnell's staff and partners without her permission (Smolen, 2006). Clearly, taking advantage of free workshops on new educational technology was overstepping boundaries. It was at this point that I began to care less and less about protocol and authority, and instead became more focused on what I could do. Data from field notes explains this subtle change in me.

In the meantime, Thomas was in heaven. We were informed that the Apple laptops, which were still in storage, would be put into the trailers as well, and internet would be operational in the next few days. Since more and more visitors were coming in, crowding the place, we exchanged information and slowly made our way to the playground area. Passing between all the trailers was a treat, the décor on the trailers included zebras, which instead of stripes had piano keys, elephants with trumpets for trunks, and giraffes on wheels, and many other creatures that provided a jovial feeling to the environment. The main playground was not the only place for children to play. Every trailer had an adjacent play area in the back. For service providers such as YMCA and Early Head Start (Figure 13), more age appropriate equipment was installed. Adjacent to the Family Center, outside benches were installed for folks to visit or rest. Also, handicapped entrances were built for every trailer. Several residents at RV were in wheelchairs, having such accommodations as proper entrances available provided another reason for joy. At sunset, everyone began to return home. In the parking lot I was stopped by Renard, who informed me that in the next few days every service provider would receive official information as to proper conduct, rules and regulations, and schedule of operation.



Figure 13. Individual Rosie O'Donnell Classroom Trailer

The day of the opening ceremony signified a new beginning for operations. It also signified a new structure for all education services. The Louisiana Family Recovery Corps (LFRC), not Literacy Coalition, was placed in charge of all after-school activities, this included coordinating the DEP efforts as well. Renard assumed the position of director of LFRC. Feeling a small sign of relief on my part, for not having to coordinate such a large project, made me appreciate that someone else had to dedicate their time to these efforts. A new setting meant new beginnings.

New Role, New Place

The semester ended with no official professor on record for the EDUC 2000 course, the Major West Coast institution relationship was on the rocks, and a new structure was implemented at RV (Smolen, 2006). In this juncture, DEP joined several other educational programs in order to avoid replicating practices, in particular City Year in their after-school efforts, but also to establish a more structured and organized frame. LFRC asserted the agenda of approved activities to be held on the premises and how they were to be executed. Due to our continuous presence for the past year and a half, and continuous high attendance of RV children, DEP emerged as a significant partner, which would provide participants to any future

programming. However, the intra-service competition and resentment of affiliations began to surface.

Several individuals from LFRC felt that LSU's hegemonic influence was trying to overshadow their efforts and expected DEP to take advantage of this in order to establish a stable program in order to publish their successes (Smolen, 2007). Having previously faced the ethical dilemmas of when to conduct research on a vulnerable population, a memorandum of understanding was signed through the IRB office, that no publications would be sent out before all parties read and agreed upon due credit, especially LSU and Major West Coast institution (Smolen, 2008) (See Appendix D). However, that did not seem to subdue many of the concerns. Accusations and diminishing DEP significance on site began to dominate the agenda.

The Major West Coast institution and West Coast program staff continuously pressured DEP to develop digital stories. Sinsonte, Major West Coast institution's graduate student and now former LSU partner, began to work with LC staff in order to keep up West Coast program's efforts and fulfill the work that DEP could not do (Smolen, 2007). However, all of this was done while refusing to talk to or work with LSU, further publicly maligning LSU and all efforts of cooperation. For example, a multitude of conference calls were set up by all parties to resolve issues at hand; however, all conference calls set up by LSU were either ignored or forgotten by LC staff, or attended by an LC staff member with no decision-making power. Furthermore, conference calls between West Coast and LFRC staff took place where major programmatic decisions were made, but LSU was not included or notified of such meetings. It was only upon entering the site and walking in on a conference call already in session that the LSU staff was made aware that such meetings were taking place (Smolen, 2007, 2008). Updates as to new

changes were related to DEP predominantly via City Year staff. This strained relationship persisted until the very end of all programming and closure of RV.

This mistrusting relationship made the transition for DEP to an overarching educational programming at RV extremely strenuous for the coordinators and staff (Smolen, 2007). Despite efforts to keep the LSU students away from the difficult relationship, several situations arose where the students were berated by Renard for trying to take over the facility and failing to follow the agreed upon rules and program instructions, though not communicated to DEP's staff. This occurred in front of other service providers and RV children (Jetson, 2006). This arose more acutely in December of 2006. In all cases, these accusations were fallacious, and were meant to add to the record of uncooperative behavior on LSU's part, in order to exclude LSU completely from RV (Jetson, 2006, 2007; Smolen, 2006, 2007; Thomas, 2006). In the spring of 2007, DEP's participants were allowed to interact with children ages 4 to 9 in only one trailer and only on one side of RV, at a designated time with sufficient LC staff to monitor all activities. However, one of the greatest forms of undermining DEP's efforts was the refusal to follow the hierarchical structure of authority by one service provider in particular.

At the interim months of winter, December and January, Thomas and Jetson were the official site coordinators, while I assumed the post of Campus Coordinator. Any concerns from the site were first to go through the site coordinators, any issues that could not be resolved by them, were reported to me. The next person overseeing our duties was the Dean of COE, until a permanent professor could be assigned to the program for the spring semester. The LFRC director in question voiced her accusations and concerns immediately to the dean, who luckily was aware of the difficulties at the site. Luckily, the LSU administrators were more successful in mending the situation and reminding all parties involved of the mission of the program. After

several private meetings between the LFRC staff and the dean, DEP coordinators were treated with a stiff and formal kindness and LSU students were moderately tolerated. From an innovative and responsive program that was developed in the beginning, DEP assumed a supportive role to the LFRC programming.

The transition of roles was extremely difficult for me. Having been able to determine what activities would suit the RV children best and help LSU students grow, I was forced to relinquish authority over these decisions and submit to participating in the strained relationship. It was during this time that the Dean of COE called me into her office asking if I wanted to change my assistantship, if the current situation was too stressful and was affecting my graduate work. As furious as I was with the RV situation, the type of mistreatment and humiliation everyone at DEP had to endure, I could not help but consider the people who were suffering from this debacle were the RV children, and I simply could not desert them. Having worked so hard to develop relationships with both the children and community members, abandoning all efforts did not cross my mind. In addition, I understood very well that in my position as a graduate student, I could not implement many changes while working with those who were much higher in the strata of other organizations (Smolen, 2007). Though I did possess the COE Dean's approval and confidence in what I was doing, my position was not enough to bring authority to the conference table. It was then that a more permanent professor was assigned by the dean, Dr. Laura Jewett.

This was a transition point into stability that determined a major step in the bricoleur structure. Having brought a new form of teaching, story circle, developed by John O'Neal, a New Orleans civil rights activist, and provided a fresh perspective on what DEP could be within the current situation. Dr. Jewett stayed on with DEP until the very closure of educational

programming, Rosie O'Donnell's facilities, and RV itself. While continuing to work with LFRC, City Year, and Big Buddy, the LSU students began working solely with younger RV children on homework assignments. LFRC's mission for the new semester was to target the students' achievement gaps and help the schoolteachers prepare the children for that year's LEAP tests. In that effort, completing homework sheets and assignments was crucial. However, as the activities at the new facilities were going to be more rigorous, many of the children did not want to attend the after school programming. DEP was blamed for low attendance (Smolen, 2007). Due to having casual conversations with the children outside the facilities meant that DEP was responsible for discouraging attendance. In order to rectify the situation, a new partnership with LSU's Kinesiology department was developed as a continued effort to ensure participation. Adding the element of physical education with university students would allow adding an element of fun to the overall program (Smolen, 2007). Though the suggestion of adding the Kinesiology element had been discussed for some time now, starting their operation now was opportune for several reasons.

In 2005, after the evacuees were moved to the Baton Rouge convention center, several Kinesiology students took physical education equipment and began conducting activities with the evacuees (Carson, 2008). Therefore, Kinesiology staff was not new to lending a helping hand in such efforts. Several professors expressed willingness to help, but one professor in particular, Dr. Russ Carson, immediately set up his course to fit the needs of RV. Together with one of his graduate students, a list of potential activities were developed and approved by the LFRC staff. With his help RV after school programming regained attendees. According to the younger students, they were excited to be playing with university students again (Jetson, 2007; Smolen, 2007). The last 40 minutes of the after school programming became a reward for completing

homework and behaving well at school and in the trailer. Teenagers were not allowed to come and play.

The teenage programming was conducted in the (now) old library trailer. LFRC staff fearing that the facilities would be abused or destroyed by the RV teenagers, letting them stay at the old facilities seemed a smart choice (Smolen, 2007). Cowsar still served in that trailer as a janitor but also as an occasional sympathetic ear for the young adults. Marking as untrustworthy made them more edgy and rambunctious. When requesting to conduct more activities in the teenage program, DEP was refused by LFRC and reminded that we were lucky to be allowed to work with the younger students. Such a relationship and atmosphere persisted throughout the year. Yet with Dr. Jewett on board, the majority of complaints were directed at her, leaving me to learn how to teach a college level course. With having a more defined frame of operating a service-learning class, it demanded that students developed a final project for credit. After an extensive amount of discussion, LFRC staff finally relented, resulting in the first Future Fair to be organized (Figure 14) but only for 4-9 year olds.



Figure 14. DEP in Rosie O'Donnell Facilities

Though the intent was to target the teenagers and help them explore career options, DEP was told that LFRC covered such efforts already by ensuring the improvement of test scores (Smolen, 2007).

New Opportunities

The summer of 2007 was an extreme change for DEP. Both Thomas and Jetson resigned their posts as coordinators due to time availability as well as difficulty in communicating with the LC staff. The amount of additional stress proved to be too much in conjunction with regular university courses, as well as, for Thomas, family life. Being the last remaining member of the original DEP group was a tough realization. It made me realize how many changes took place in the past year. LFRC communicated that after school activities would discontinue after LEAP tests were complete and would focus on fun activities. However, upon completing the tests, finishing homework assignments still dominated the agenda. It was also made clear by Renard that DEP's participation in the summer months would not be needed, except for Kinesiology students if possible (Smolen, 2006). Carson's class came throughout that summer.

During these months I learned by observation what a proper graduate student was to do: prepare materials for conference presentations, present, gather data for publishing, and complete coursework. Compared to the previous summer, my efforts seemed selfish and self-centered. I wanted to be at RV helping and playing with the kids, but that was not to be with current circumstances. Jewett continued to work on the parameters within which DEP could assist in the following semester. Efforts became futile beyond homework assistance. Meanwhile on the LSU campus, the word had spread about the work we were doing with the evacuees. Fall semester EDUC 2000 attendance mirrored that of the first semester of DEP, 15 dedicated students. Coincidentally most of these students were from New Orleans. Once again most of the students

were not education majors but were interested in the work being done at RV. Further, many of the students had experience working at summer camps or church camps. This was the semester where the first study participants attended the course, this included: Trung, Wayne, and Fadden. With their help and backgrounds, the LSU students quickly developed relationships with the RV children. As a result the conversations they had during play time allowed for more responsive final projects to be developed. Addressing the issue of water, and how RV kids were still scared of excess rain, the LSU students redirected their fears by emphasizing how water is a source of life for many creatures. Consequently one of the final projects was a fish tank with which a set of activities followed. It took over three weeks to convince Renard to allow the fish tank to be a permanent object in the classroom. Her opposition to permanent articles in the trailers highly resembled that of FEMA attitude, while her approach to DEP paralleled that of RV security. Perhaps that was why she wore office suits with military boots as her daily attire while working (Smolen, 2006). Sinsonte followed suit when it came to attitude and approach, sans boots. Pulling RV children from LSU students to conduct digital story activities in the adjacent classroom became a common pursuit. Initially frustrating to me, thanks to Jewett's calm demeanor and unrelenting advice to observe not the staff but the reaction of the children, it became clear that they wanted to finish the computer task as fast as possible only to return to continue working with LSU students (Smolen, 2006). The interaction between the RV children and LSU students was more meaningful than I expected. Redirecting my focus to that relationship helped abate my negativity and feelings of helplessness. The interaction with Kinesiology students continued to further LSU's cause as well. After the EDUC 2000 students finished tutoring and helping with homework, everyone went on to the playground where the Kinesiology students waited with activities for everyone. It was in those moments that DEP

members were able to discuss the kids' daily lives and subjects that interested each RV child. Through those conversations, many of the LSU students found common ground with the kids and had a hard time saying goodbye when the semester was about to end. Consequently, in the following semester, Spring 2008, many of the Fall 2007 students retook the class and recruited their friends to help with DEP's efforts. For the next three semesters several students took the class up to three times, maximum amount allowed by LSU. Seeing their dedication, I sought their input into the analysis of DEP and its practices at RV.

LSU Student Perspectives on DEP and RV

Though both the coordinators and I captured the initial metamorphic stage of DEP, and impressions from RV site, it was also worth analyzing how LSU students from the EDUC 2000 also perceived the site and the effectiveness of the program. The students interviewed for this study came from the time when Laura Jewett taught the course; therefore, their exposure to reading materials and discussions were conducted by the same group of individuals.

The participants selected for inclusion in this part of the study were those who took the course multiple times. Collins, Onwuegbuzie, and Jiao (2007) documented convenience sampling as one possible purposive sampling scheme. In addition, Patton (2001) describes criterion sampling, where in study participants are selected based on predetermined criterion, in this case having taken the course maximum time (Patton, 2001). In addition, I selected these participants due to my ability to locate those students who had participated and enrolled multiple times.

As mentioned before, EDUC 2000 was an elective course allowing students to enroll up to three times for full nine hours of credits. As the program matured, so did the course and the students who took it. Over the course of eight semesters of its existence nine students took the

course three times; however, only four responded to the request for an interview. All four students come from Louisiana: two came from New Orleans, the others were from Baton Rouge and Lafayette, both major cities are west of New Orleans, along Interstate 10, and impacted by individuals displaced due to Katrina. Three of the participants were African American females and one Asian American male. Interestingly enough the female participants belonged to the same church group at the time of their college experience. Shanika Wayne (pseudonyms will be used for all participants) joined EDUC 2000 in its 3rd semester of existence and encouraged her friends from church to join the course. She was the only participant who experienced the transition of DEP relocating from Rosie O'Donnell's classroom trailers to conducting activities with evacuee children at schools beyond RV. In the following semesters many students took the course twice and in most cases they recruited their friends. Ronald Trung (pseudonym) was also encouraged to take the class by one of his friends. All of the study participants took the class at least one time. This allowed me to triangulate the observations of the site, class activities, and reading as well as activities conducted there. Further, all study participants had signed consent forms every semester to allow researchers under the IRB to use their course journals, called diablogs, for research purposes. Over 20 diablogs were collected per person per semester, and coded using Atlas.ti software to determine themes. The analysis below includes data from both diablogs and the informal, face-to-face interviews that were conducted in December of 2011.

First Impressions

As mentioned above, all students came from Louisiana and understood the cultural significance of New Orleans for their state, influences that came out of that city, as well as understood the types of personality of its people. However, all of the participants expressed collective shock and disbelief upon entering the premises of RV. "It was scary at first... these

people were from the city and now they were thrown in a land, into an empty space,” (Kirianne Fadden, 2011). Having been told in class about the extent of cow pastures and the immediate neighbor, Jetson Juvenile Correctional Center surrounding the RV Park, the students still did not believe that such a location would be chosen for those who have grown up all their lives in a city. Many were not surprised in the end that participants attempted to leave RV to go back to New Orleans or find a job in Baton Rouge. In fact, it was a consistent struggle for RV residents just to find transportation back into any city or parish.

It was different, like when I first got there it was still unreal like the effects of the hurricane was still going on, with it being almost a year after...it was bad, to see people living like that, to be going from a home to a trailer, to small trailer with big families with so many extended family members, but living in one small trailer (Boudreau, 2011).

The feeling of shock regarding how the RV residents were forced to live was a perpetual topic that reemerged in class throughout the EDUC 2000 course. The participants from New Orleans explained that even though large extended family members were used to living together, however, the size of the trailers could have contribute to a more stressful environment for both children and caregivers living within. Therefore, the sometimes hostile behavior of both was an understandable factor that DEP participants had to learn to work around, and contributed to RV children’s behavioral issues at school (Smolen, 2007).

“When I first went to Renaissance Village, I was amazed at the magnitude of these trailers and, you know, like the devastation it caused to see people still, ‘cause I went back to New Orleans after a while but to see people were still dislocated...it was just heartbreaking,” (Wayne, 2011). The general public, and the students themselves, expected many of the evacuees to have gone back to New Orleans and begin rebuilding their homes and communities; however, the reality was a lot more complicated. The study participants’ families were affected as well, yet many had relatives who lived in the areas nearby (Baton Rouge, Lafayette, etc.) who were able

to make the transitions easier due to economic standing and stability. The exposure to RV residents made the EDUC 2000 students open their eyes to the other groups who still struggled.

One of the first things I saw was one of the residents was reaching into the garbage cans and looking for cans to I guess to breakdown and collect to get money for them so I thought ‘wow people are living hard in here.’ It struck me as a hard place to live in...I didn’t think it was the best place to live but they kind of didn’t have much of a choice I mean they had to go there, I mean that was the best the government could do for them that was not the best place to live in, (Trung, 2011).

Yet despite the surroundings and conditions of the evacuees, the LSU students depicted several positive aspects of RV and in the evacuees’ circumstance.

Overall I thought it was good to have all the New Orleans people in one community where they can still be together. I thought that that was good for giving the people somewhere to stay other than a hotel or on the street, (Boudreau, 2011).

All participants mentioned that a sense of community was an important factor in the recovery after a disaster. As mentioned before, many residents became resourceful in sharing transportation. The installation of bus routes from RV was a huge step in helping the evacuees become more self-sufficient (Wayne, 2011). The necessity to share resources and information was of high importance since resource availability and conflicting information were a constant concern. The creation of church groups and RV counsel became the strongest representatives of community. However other positive aspects existed as well.

I was kind of like, it made me sad because these people had to live at a trailer park and they were secluded from the outside-world and I mean we had to travel so far to get to Baker and it felt like they were so far from society and once I went in there and I looked at the security as a good thing because people who were living in New Orleans before Katrina probably didn’t have that sense of security, they probably lived in fear of robbery and things of that nature. So it kind of was a good thing that maybe that they did have this type of security...(Fadden, 2011).

The topic of security caused conflicting feelings to emerge from course participants and in particular amongst the interviewees. Those from New Orleans claimed that the amount of

security depended upon the area they were from and where they traveled to but for the most part it was safe enough to travel around; however, the type of security provided at RV was excessive and demeaning as if to send a message that New Orleans people were not to be trusted and should be controlled (Boudreau, 2008). For participants and for me, the juxtaposition of RV to cows in a pasture was not lost. Both were herded and contained.

Whereas the other two interviewees maintained that, in general, New Orleans was a dangerous city. Nonetheless, they also perceived that the security at RV was a somewhat positive element that helped to shelter the evacuees from unwanted outside solicitations (Fadden, 2009; Trung, 2008). Both sides maintained their stance on the issue throughout their time of participation.

Another positive aspect that resulted from RV was the change of schools for the children. All participants agreed that the general educational system in New Orleans was faulty and failed to provide satisfactory educational services for its residents. Boudreau and Wayne both experienced the New Orleans system, however, the school that they both attended was one of the best ones in New Orleans. That did not impede their knowledge of what was going on outside of their school walls. Therefore looking at the RV children and their educational circumstance, all participants agreed that leaving NO was a constructive step, educationally.

And some of them [RV children] went to schools that were all Black in New Orleans and then they came out to Baton Rouge and Baker or whatever and were able to migrate with other cultures and especially other ethnicities (Fadden, 2011).

The awareness of the ethnic breakdown of New Orleans schools contributed to constructive discussions in EDUC 2000, especially for those who were not from the city and were not aware of the predicaments that existed, in particular when concerning ethnicity, social economic status, and the history of minority struggle, all within the educational milieu. When asked, “What were

their impressions of the residents and their interaction with them throughout their time with DEP?” all admitted that they had a limited amount of exposure to the adults. However, Brenna Boudreau, who experienced the transition, did manage to have some quality time with the parents of the children we served.

I encountered different people, most were positive about somebody giving them a place to stay, their kids having a place to go to school, but like others just talking like why giving this and that, I thought that was kind of selfish, like [RV] people saying ‘they’re [charities] giving you a hand-out’ and you complaining (Boudreau, 2011).

The study participants noted in several instances where a few adult residents expressed resentment towards the donations that were made for their cause (Boudreau, 2008; Fadden, 2009; Wayne, 2008). The reasons for their complaints were never fully understood or further investigated. However, such sentiment was not shared by other adult residents, in fact “the parents of the kids, the ones that I met, they were really nice, they were concerned you know about their kids, what they were doing educationally,” (Wayne, 2011). Those parents who sent their children to the afterschool program, including DEP, were those who appreciated the efforts done by the multitude of organizations and foundations, and were willing to take full advantage of its accessibility. Again, the stereotype of uncaring parents was dispersed. The children also came with many presumptions that were made by outsiders, including the LSU students.

As mentioned before, most of the children at RV came from low socio-economic status, multi-generational homes, and attended schools where they often failed them. Many organizations that entered the RV premises sought out residents’ stories but did not attempt to help them look toward the future. Several “passing-through” service providers focused on the moment in time but did not expect the children to comprehend the magnitude and significance of their situation (Smolen, 2007).

Umm, the kids were the complete opposite. It was like people thought they're naïve and don't understand what's going on around them but there...it was completely different, the children knew that this was home, and that this was the only place they could go. It was just surreal to me 'cause being such young children going through such hardship and taking it in stride (Boudreau, 2011).

Several of the children that the LSU students worked with, witnessed the death of loved ones and the loss of community and relatives. In most cases, RV teenagers had to take care of their younger siblings while parents tried to sort out possibilities for moving back to New Orleans, find jobs in Baton Rouge, or experienced trauma that impeded them physically and mentally to leave their trailer (Smolen, 2009). Combined with experiencing the terror of the storm itself, botched evacuation attempts, and the relocation of RV, RV teenagers had to grow up faster than their average peers.

By the time the study interviewees joined EDUC 2000 the Rosie O'Donnell facilities had been open for almost six months. The service providers that found lodging there were still trying to organize staff and find willing participants. For services, such as the government sponsored Early Head Start and Head Start, participants sprouted seemingly overnight. Many parents took advantage of these services in particular because it allowed them to leave their children in good care while exposing their children to early educational settings, while at the same time allowing them, the parents, to go and/or look for jobs. Before Katrina, parents were used to leaving their children with extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, or cousins, even neighbors who were living within close range to one another. Faced with the loss of family and community networks, they were forced to look for other venues to help take care of their children. Many parents, however, were not aware that the government provided support programs such as Head Start. At RV this was their first time to come in contact with such services (Smolen, 2009). In the eyes of the LSU students, Rosie O'Donnell's facilities, as a whole, represented "a ray of hope

back there, a glimmer of peace,” (Wayne, 2011), which provided a reminder of the New Orleans vibe with its colors, symbols, and fun-loving atmosphere (Fadden, 2011). However, other elements of New Orleans culture were also visible around RV.

Cultural Elements

Upon entering the gates of RV, the participants depicted multiple cultural elements that reminded them of where the residents came from and how they tried to make it their home, despite FEMA claims for temporary establishment.

I saw a lot of things that you would find in New Orleans like people hanging out by cars, playing music, you know sitting out, just talking and that’s what a lot of New Orleans is, just people sitting on their porches hanging out and laughing and having fun. Just having a relaxed moment. And we did see that when we drove through (Wayne, 2011).

Others depicted more specific elements that I did not expect or knew were specific to New Orleans:

Well, just seeing so many Black people [at RV] and when I go to New Orleans I see a lot of Black people and so just seeing all the Black people all around just made me think of it, you know, and [it] made me think of New Orleans and the accent and their mannerisms. But more specifically the kids’ personalities, the hairstyles, you know, the dreds, it just amazed me that so young a kids already have dreds and think that they’re from New Orleans, because normally when people see dreds they think they’re from Atlanta or New Orleans or something like that...I don’t know...there was a lot of music and I saw a lot of music symbols because I think music represents New Orleans as far as jazz, even though I didn’t see any jazz itself but umm I saw a lot of colors and music symbols which represents New Orleans a lot. I didn’t really see specifics I just would see a lot of these in the children, like the accents, like within the individual and their culture rather than around the buildings (Fadden, 2011).

The forms of speech and vocabulary were prominent components that three of the four interviewees described as one of the most significant cultural elements that was found at RV.

The entire vernacular is different in New Orleans, when we go to other places people can immediately tell where we’re from, I feel like there’s even a language barrier especially with the young kids who are just developing in their language to go somewhere else and their culture is

accepted of who they are or older people would come in and speak the way they speak and using the same terminology, I think that was important for them (Boudreau, 2011).

Many of the service providers from outside of Louisiana experienced communication difficulties due to not being able to follow the lingua franca (Smolen, 2009), myself included. However, having the children teach other out-of-state students, as well as myself, several verbal expressions helped in opening communication channels. With the increase of LSU students from New Orleans in DEP and in EDUC 2000, less time was spent on explaining the vernacular differences and more focus was dedicated to programmatic issues. However the question persisted whether the participants' background, helped in developing relationships with the New Orleans children.

Like I said before, I could relate better because I was the same ethnicity as them so they felt more comfortable with me because we're the same skin color, I mean I don't know if that's really true because I don't really know how they see people who are white or how they relate to them but I really felt that I connected in a way with them because I was Black, and I think they felt a lot more comfortable with me to like 'ok, I think you might be a bit less strange to when I say things', things of that nature, and connected on that level (Fadden, 2011).

Naïve as I was, the ethnic background did not seem significant to me in the beginning. As the program progressed from its inception, I realized the value and implications ethnicity truly had upon the DEP participants both from LSU and from RV. Though the question whether background mattered remained, for me, an item to explore, the LSU students immediately confirmed its significance. This helped to maintain an ease of relating to the children since they were from the same city.

People who were from New Orleans going in to be with the kids, so it was like, people who were from the same place that you were from and being around the same environment 'cause I know in my experience people couldn't relate culturally to what we do and how we live in New Orleans so bringing it back to the children was so important because it allowed them to open up in that who they wanted to be (Boudreau, 2011).

Therefore, though not apparent at first glance, having program volunteers or workers from the same point of origin (New Orleans) appeared to be an important factor in maintaining relationships with the RV residents. During the interview process, several anecdotes were conveyed where New Orleans cultural elements were featured. One in particular struck me as pertinent:

[I]n Renaissance Village...I believe some of the teachers were helping out at the community center [another Rosie O'Donnell trailer, adjacent to the educational one] were also from New Orleans and like we were talking about, people willing to stick together and there's one kid, little Charles [pseudonym], he came in and he was generally a nice kid and we made friends pretty quickly but over time I began to see him, you know, like get angry and just get um...moody; and then I found out that his trailer had burned down and that's why he was experiencing that, and the people were able to unite and be there for him and his family. And kids would try not to anger him or pick on him, not take it lightly like 'you going to do something'; to me that's a New Orleans cultural experience and it was definitely, like, people coming together (Wayne, 2011).

There were several instances where trailers burnt down or were broken into, this boy's story is particularly sad, considering that his trailer burned twice (Smolen, 2009). Though the safety security in RV appeared to be vigilant, the Baker emergency services were called in at least once a week to put out a fire, answer reports of theft or medical emergencies; FEMA still resisted paying the full amount of money owed from such frequent services (June In, 2008). However, the general sense of community and willingness to unite to help each other persisted as one of the main unifying elements at RV.

[W]hen you go through something traumatic like that and you're with people that [have] gone through similar thing, people are always going to come together in unity and I felt a sense of that at Renaissance Village; they lived together, they rode the bus together, and those kids were even like able more able to stick together, since they were all going to the same school and speak together and be with each other [all the time] (Wayne, 2011).

However, when asking the study interviewees whether they noticed any cultural elements being included in DEP, EDUC 2000, programming at RV, several answers were given. However, Trung summed the sentiment most concisely.

I guess well, a lot of us came from different backgrounds and added to the program and being from Baton Rouge and going through Katrina helped at RV and in the class also, because we could connect with the kids because of the experiences with Katrina, but it was hard to include cultural elements into the program (Trung, 2011).

Despite the efforts done by Laura Jewett and myself, to allow the LSU students to develop responsive activities at RV, their participation was restricted to what the LC staff needed them to do, and as time progressed the educational services were shifted to the After School Tutorial Program, where most activities focused on completing school homework and entertaining the children outside on the playground for a small period of time. LSU students did manage to connect with the children and their parents, especially during the time after homework was caught and by working alongside the LSU Kinesiology students, who were also a part of another service-learning course tied to DEP. In those moments, participants were able to hold conversations based on what the children or parents wanted to discuss. The topics varied depending on the age group.

Frequently Discussed Topics

The younger children frequently talked about music, rappers in particular (Trung, 2011). This type of music surrounded them and their immediate environment, making them more interested in specific artists. The most amusing part of the conversations was that LSU students did not know who the artists were. This required frequent performances by the RV kids to educate the LSU students (Trung, 2008; Fadden, 2009). Other children complained, “They didn’t have much space to run around and be free to be children” (Boudreau, 2011). The Rosie O’Donnell’s facilities were only available to families during the hours when programs were

conducted and one had to be a participant of a program to gain access to enter the premises. Consequently, the playground was often closed and children and parents were not allowed to use the installations at their leisure. Similarly, the forested area with barbeque grills was often closed. RV residents were not trusted to use the equipment in a safe and non-destructive manner (Smolen, 2008). This predicament became one of the goals for DEP to solve in the following stages of its metamorphosis.

Other young children were more aware of their parents' struggle and knew that RV was not their permanent home.

I met one little boy, his name was Joe [pseudonym], I tutored him a lot, like I went to him five days a week like clock work. And one of the main things he would talk about was how he was never going to be able to go back home, how New Orleans didn't exist anymore, and stuff like that. And it was real sad because he only was like ten years old (Boudreau, 2011).

The sense of disappointment was also shared by RV young adults who were a lot more distrusting of their surroundings. Having experienced bullying in the Baker schools, due to the 225 and 504 differences, and knowing that 504 kids didn't always measure up to the educational standards of their peers, simply made their stay a lot more stressful. They, in particular, were more anxious to return to New Orleans, yet knowing that was not always possible.

They [young adults] were pretty discouraged about going back. The one thing they shared between them was that it was complicated, like in a lot of circumstances, when they wanted to move- a lot of things that they portrayed, were things that were really going on and it really turned people away from attempting to move back,' (Boudreau, 2011).

Some of the teenagers in question were those whose families had tried to move back in 2007, were unsuccessful and had to returned to RV. They stated that their parents couldn't afford the new rent, which was twice as high, government buildings were not ready to accept new tenants, and few jobs could be found that paid sufficiently to maintain a family (Smolen, 2007). Hence, hearing conversations with the adults that were similarly discouraged did not seem out of the

ordinary; however, most of their concerns circled around their immediate circumstances: their children's educational progress (Boudreau, 2008), safety of staying in trailers (Wayne, 2008), as well as overall safety at RV.

Well, I know the adults complained a lot about the space and all the stuff they had to go through to live there [RV] like it was hard to get in and get out without showing an ID, and it's hard living in a trailer park, in any situation, in any circumstance, where it's just cluttered so that was one of the main things, and they complained about the traffic. I heard like a couple of kids got hit by a car because the speed limit was high, and stuff like that (Boudreau, 2011).

However, not all topics were negative. This was prominent in conversations with the older generation, grandparents of some of the children. They discussed wanting to go back home because, "that's where I'm going and no one's ever going to stop me from living where I want to live and we're rebuilding and [them] just being optimistic about going back," (Boudreau, 2011). In a few cases, those families did manage to rebuild and go back; while others found new homes in the Baton Rouge area; while others were moved to hotel rooms at the very end.

Yet the biggest question that led my investigation was how and whether DEP was culturally responsive, as opposed to, reactive and how was it culturally responsive. Furthermore, I wanted to know whether the program was able to include cultural elements into its programming considering the change in leadership roles at RV and the additional programs who did not want us there. This became worthy of consideration.

Culturally Responsive

This section presents specific data themes that were culturally responsive as determined through my analysis. They are presented here:

Responsiveness Concerning RV Children

Despite the administrative difficulties, there were many aspects of DEP being culturally responsive, in terms of programming. The study participants noted these aspects. The primary success was the development of trust amongst the children themselves.

The kids at Renaissance Village, they were...umm kind of liked when we first came into the program and the longer we stayed there, the more [we] started to develop relationships and they would be excited to find out that some of us were from New Orleans, and had been through the same thing and then they would come and talk to us about home life and what's going on at school and it grew from just afterschool program where we helped with homework to forming bonds and that's how we were able to find out that they like fish and so we got a fish-tank and they named the fish after we did some activities and different things like that (Wayne, 2011).

One of the goals of the service-learning classes was to develop a final project. For EDUC 2000, we wanted LSU students to develop a project based on what DEP participants wanted or needed. This required that students investigate, question, discuss, and design a project that was educational as well as culturally responsive. While many younger DEP participants wanted a show-and-tell or a musical performance with college students, more academically rigorous projects were sought. The fish tank project became a unit that the children worked on for almost two weeks (Fadden, 2008; Wayne, 2008). In the end, a fish tank and several fish were bought, and depending on the day and the child, fish acquired a plethora of names and roles (Smolen, 2009). All of this was possible through the development of trust, relationships, and understanding of where RV children's interests lied (Trung, 2011; Wayne, 2011). Moreover, the study participants depicted that with their multiple-semester presence, RV children were reassured that the LSU efforts were not as short-termed as those of other programs.

I felt that DEP actually helped to bring back more the New Orleans culture just by interacting with the kids and stuff like that, because a lot of times people left [service providers] and were shunned by the wannabe's [service providers who wanted to gain access], I mean it was portrayed that everyone was excited and so welcoming but that wasn't the case in a lot of

schools; and I felt with DEP going with mentoring and tutoring and playing with the children it brought a sense of homeliness like ‘I’m back in my element’ and culturally they did have that need for younger kids...(Boudreau, 2011).

DEP’s presence assisted with tutoring elements of the After School educational program, but it also helped the children in adapting to their fluid circumstances and understand how to deal with the imposed outside environment. Being outside of their comfort zone, New Orleans, and having few consistent influences in their lives, the difficulties of adaptation came from different perspectives.

It definitely showed me how culture impacted the students’ lives. I’ve seen that maybe being away from New Orleans helped them even more because they were not in the environment, in that society that they were in before and I think that the move that they made helped them out to realize a lot of things; and not being around the things they were around as far as bad influences and them being in Baker, helped the kids in focusing on their education and focus on different cultures like them being in Baton Rouge or Baker or wherever they were going to school was way different to when they were in New Orleans. It showed them that they can have a life outside New Orleans, because some of them have never left New Orleans until Katrina. So as far as that...I thought that it was very important for them to see that and that education was more than just books and like actual life lessons, so I thought that that was really important for them and their lives (Fadden, 2011).

The exposure to university students from similar New Orleans ethnicities study subjects other than law, medicine, or education was a novel idea. “I thought that was good ‘cause it showed kids that there are other things out there,” (Bourdreau, 2011).

I think that they [RV children] also grew, and encouraged them to go to college and ‘you can do it’ like it doesn’t matter where you came from you can still, like it’s possible and so for them to see people who came from the same place grow and be successful, made an impact on them (Wayne, 2011).

Also, having the exposure to so many international students since the opening of RV provided many RV children with new perspectives on travel and places to explore. However, these

elements contributed more to expanding their educational core, rather than to their cultural heritage.

Responsiveness Concerning LSU Students

On the other hand, the study interviewees regarded EDUC 2000 as a course that helped them culturally aware (Harry, 1992):

I feel and think the class increased in a sense, educating us about different cultures and about being culturally competent and learning how children deal with this issue and maybe they're more responsive with this and maybe children of different minorities this is a good approach and like understanding where people are coming from and understanding where people are at in life and you know, and just educating us made us more effective when we actually went out when we volunteered and that it's ok to open up and to be human and to laugh and joke with the kids and be responsive, that you don't have to be strict and be the authoritative figure, although you do want to keep in check and balance [their behavior]. So I felt like the program grew as we learned as we had trial and error, and we would come back and share our experiences 'oh well this worked for me and what differed for me was, and the kids liked when I did this.' And so I feel like we grew in culture and what works, just learning about the culture of New Orleans. That's how I feel we grew (Wayne, 2011).

Though the question was meant to see how DEP responded culturally to the needs of children at RV, LSU interviewees were transfixed on how DEP was responsive to their needs instead.

Touting that the experience at RV, and how their exposure to the evacuees had changed their perspectives on those who were affected, LSU students focused on how the program contributed to their educational experience. Considering that all interviewees were from Louisiana and had never been asked to analyze their own culture and its elements, they were now being asked to look through a cultural lens to assess how a program was adapted to their culture. This experience seemed to demand a great deal of introspection on their part. Consequently, this led to the students becoming more culturally aware (Harry, 1992) of practices at the RV site as well as in EDUC 2000 class.

Like I said, it was an eye opener for me to not be judgmental of them [RV residents] because it's like just because of their background, [it] doesn't determine what they're going to be like, because a lot of the kids were really smart and it was like...they needed encouragement and positive reinforcement [which] could take a child really far...it was really surprising to me, it really showed me that I shouldn't be judgmental and it really stuck with me because it really contributed to my education and I'm working now with people with disability and that was very important in my career because if I judge them just because they have a disability they think that they're not capable of being successful or whatnot (Fadden, 2011).

All participants expressed a sense of humility while and after working with the RV children. The element that was most admired was the resiliency of the children, especially the younger ones, and their belief that the "Re-New Orleans" slogan developed to instill hope in rebuilding the city, was applicable to them (Smolen, 2008). This sentiment had to do with pride:

"New Orleans people are more proud to be from that city even though Baton Rouge people represent a lot, people from New Orleans always say 'oh I'm from New Orleans', for them it's more of a vibe" (Trung, 2011). The theme of pride seemed to consistently arise in the study interviewees' dialogues. The constant observations by LSU students of DEP's participants' stubbornness or comparison of things differing at school always led to comparisons between Baton Rouge and New Orleans and how things in New Orleans were better (Boudreau, 2009; Fadden, 2009). In many instances, such comparisons at school led to 225 versus 504 bullying, exclusion, and even expulsion, when behavior escalated to violent fights. Though LSU students did not have access to the schools where the RV children attended, they knew of such incidents from the press and lent a sympathetic ear, thus providing emotional support. Several complaints were recorded where the children admitted that their new schools' staff was not considering their needs and always sided with Baton Rouge children (Boudreau, 2009, Wayne, 2008). These complaints were reported by LSU students to the After School program staff, who had direct contact with all the children's teachers; however, measures to resolve these issues consisted of a

private discussion with the child, thus depriving them of outside time with the other children as punishment for causing trouble at school (Smolen, 2009). Consequently, younger RV children feared the double punishment from school and the After School program. LSU students then decided collectively to listen and acknowledge these instances and not report further instances, making them, the LSU students, the children's confidants.

Though many considered the work of DEP, its goals and objectives, and time spent in the program as vital and rewarding, all study participants were eager, at their interviews, to convey suggestions for future programming and how the program could have been improved. The following captures their observations about their involvement.

It's a lot to ask but just being more available with time and, I don't know if it was with just, having more students but who are able to go there and spend time because our time at Renaissance Village was really short: go, tutor, take them out on the yard and then pretty have to leave. And it's understandable because we're in school also and it's not our only class. And we gave what we could but I think just spending more time with the kids would be something beneficial in a way, even if its just a mentor, Big Buddy or Big Brother, Big Sister type program, (Wayne, 2011).

In tandem to the LSU students dedicating their time at the site, the time should have been allocated to investigating and developing a deeper relationship with the RV residents and children. This sentiment was conveyed through the following quotation, culled from interview data.

I think to actually getting to know the children and getting to know them collectively; a lot of times we just went there were indoor class we were the teachers and I basically feel that if gotten to know the students individually and their families it would have been a lot different, a lot more understandable and that way we could find out why a child was misbehaving if they weren't shown any attention at home or maybe that child was shy because maybe their parents didn't want them talking to strangers because of what they've just been through with the hurricane and things like that and them being in a new place. I feel like we could have understood them more and would have been beneficial (Boudreau, 2011).

Further, half of the respondents suggested inclusion of several activities taking place outside of RV, such as fieldtrips to local museums, the zoo, and other locations that would serve as reinforcements of their school curriculum (Fadden, 2011; Trung, 2011). Moreover, three of the respondents suggested more activities that emphasized New Orleans and its culture. These respondents recognized the need for such activities based on conversations that they conducted with DEP participants and their constant cultural comparison between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, such as culinary differences in king cakes and fish fries, musical talents, and Mardi Gras traditions, (Smolen, 2008).

I think setting up a day for culture or even a fact-of-the-day about New Orleans and having the kids realize that New Orleans is not what everyone makes out to be because I know that there's a lot of negative things that the kids hear about New Orleans...just to give them an insight of where they came from so they can be proud of where they came from (Fadden, 2011).

On the other hand, the study participants also depicted that DEP, along with other organizations and groups, lacked in cultural responsiveness. Considering that many of the activities conducted at the After School program consisted of mainly tutoring with the assistance of several educational organizations and groups, this experience exposed the LSU students to different levels of organizations and their programmatics. As a result, the LSU students were able to compare the EDUC 2000 course, mission, and activities to those of other programs.

Lack of Cultural Responsiveness

One of the biggest elements that the respondents questioned and attempted to understand was FEMA's placement of evacuees. "These people were from the city and now they were thrown in a land with cow pastures," (Fadden, 2011). Moving a populace that only knew how to function in a city where they had established family and community networks, and were now living in trailers on the outskirts of Baker and 10 miles away from the center of Baton Rouge

with people they only shared a small cultural similarity, and being expected to function normally and making arrangements to move back, seemed unviable.

In the shoes of the evacuees, when you're going through difficult times like that you really just want to feel stability, you want to know people that you can count on, so like I said, people just being there and be able to respond if you need this or you need that – we're here, if you just need someone to talk to. I think it was just such a mess that disaster that a lot of people were like, ok we gave them this, we offered them to stay there and that's it, that's the first step. After, what was needed was someone to say 'now let's work on the people', because there were still a lot of people who didn't have anywhere to live but I think umm, like the psychological part of trauma got overlooked a lot and people were pretty much like 'ok you lost your house, ok let me see if I can get you another house' but it's like, in New Orleans it's a very cultural place so some people lost more than just their houses and cars, you know, now people lose their family members; they lost their communities were people were based at for 25-30 years, you lost friendships, you lost the position you had in your neighborhood, respect and different things like that, so I guess, more so psychological stuff and more umm...I know at the end DEP tried a lot of group work with getting the adults together to form more of a bond and more of a community, (Wayne, 2011).

The view that the psychological trauma was “overlooked” by FEMA and other organizations was also a point that all respondents agreed on. In an effort to respond to such a need, COE built a partnership with LSU Social Work department, who already developed activities for adults at the site under the name of “Building Strong Families.” The partnership provided a way for EDUC 2000 students to talk to adults about the realities of RV as well as participate in social work activities. However, the student-interviewees selected for inclusion in this study did not get a chance to partake in these activities due to their schedules. The partnership with social work and DEP is discussed in the next section.

Another significant element that the study participants noted was the different kinds of treatment of RV children by the different volunteers from partnering organizations and even LSU peers. The difference of culture was especially evident in conversations held during tutoring time and even out on the playground.

I think as far as some other volunteers were not open to accepting the culture of the children. For instance, you have a white student with a black student and they speak differently and to stop a child to correct them for what they've been taught is culturally wrong because you're trying to change something that's been instilled in them and I feel like some other [LSU] students weren't open to accepting not even the black culture but even the New Orleans culture as a whole, (Boudreau, 2011).

Most of the study participants were able to recognize where their class peers went to high school, solely based on their forms of speech, expression, and attitude. It was rather surprising to me that such differences would matter once everyone was gathered at the site and agreed to help the RV children. However, such overlooked elements were particularly stark to the African American course participants. Their shock had recorded multiple times in their diablogs. Fortunately, the course was designed so that such concerns could be addressed in a safe environment through the use of a story-circle. However, despite efforts to ameliorate the attitudes of the peers in question, no evidence has arisen to prove that any improvements were achieved. However, it did provide the LSU students with a more holistic view of how different individuals, even their own age, perceive evacuees and a populations from low socioeconomic status affected by the hurricane and how they were struggled to adapt to new circumstances.

Perceptions of Katrina

From the beginning of 2007, many RV kids were seemingly forced to grow up faster than their peers, with lessons of survival, courage, and discovery of the human element, figuring prominently into their lives. The magnitude of charitable work that was offered immediately following Katrina and the Rita gave the children hope that they were not abandoned. However, as time passed, services began to dwindle, fewer donations were being made; and from my field note analysis, it quickly became apparent that as the RV residents struggled to move out of RV and back home, often times failing, the children began to discover lessons that were beyond the immediate events. They quickly realized that they should not put too much faith or develop

relationships with service providers, since they would leave soon after they fulfilled their agendas or their funding ran out, and others would follow (Smolen, 2007, 2008). As the LSU EDUC 2000 course continued to provide LSU students to supplement DEP manpower, only a few of the students taking the class realized how the RV children perceived their presence. Only a few students understood that their work could not be done in one semester and thus took the class three times. Though interviews with RV children were not possible to obtain and thus I'm unable to determine the true impact of our program on them, I feel confident to say that the exposure to college students, and especially predominantly African American college students, allowed RV children the chance to see that higher education is an attainable goal. On the other hand, the LSU students, and the study interviewees in particular, reported the impact DEP had on them.

First of all, the interviewees admitted that going to work at Renaissance Village was an eye opening experience, despite the fact that most of them went through the evacuation process themselves. They clearly noted the difference of experience to the evacuation.

Yes, me and my family was able to evacuate for the hurricane. And although our conditions were not ideal and often times stressful I did not have to live in a trailer or a shelter. Delta opened my eyes to what others were going through although we had been through the same event. I was able to regain some normalcy by the time I met the people from RV, yet they were still living in conditions like Katrina happened a week ago. It was a reminder of how truly devastating the hurricane really was (Wayne, 2011).

Two of the participants from this study changed or modified their majors after taking the class and having worked with individuals at RV. Two of the female students were both enrolled in Kinesiology at the beginning, one changed her major to becoming a social worker focusing on working with children of color. The other switched to working in physical therapy for individuals with disabilities.

I will forever remember RV because I mention it even during my graduate classes and working with these kids, 'cause a lot of those kids had developmental problems as far as learning disability and some of it was because of their environment but I still could see that they were capable of doing what they needed to do and the fact that they needed the encouragement from others where they probably were not receiving from their home...it showed me not to judge people with disabilities no matter what they are (Fadden, 2011).

Secondly, there was complete buy-in by the LSU students of what DEP was trying to do and why their involvement was crucial to DEP's mission. Though the cultural responsiveness was not executed similarly as in previous stages, the students admitted that a measure of such responsiveness existed however on a different plan.

After DEP came in, it [DEP] created an entire culture around them, even a different culture. Even in class we had students from all different backgrounds I felt like we would expose different cultures to students and have them respond it built a whole new culture in itself (Boudreau, 2011).

Consequently, the cultural responsiveness of DEP turned from holding the RV children as the main foci, to responsiveness targeting the university students who had gone through the Katrina experience and helped in analyzing the disaster from their perspective. In other words, at this juncture of DEP, the audience who received the cultural responsiveness was the LSU students.

The following, and final, metamorphosis of DEP included the elements that the study participants expressed most often – reaching the larger population.

I think it was just such a mess that disaster that a lot of people were like, 'ok we gave them, like we offered them to stay there and that's it,' but that's the first step; now let's work on the people, because there were still a lot of people who didn't have anywhere to live or be able to address what they really needed to move on (Wayne, 2011).

The changes were not made directly from their responses, but rather from the expressed desires at the RV parents and adults themselves, while also seeing the opportunity to engage in a partnership with the LSU Social Work department staff. As parents began to feel a sense of normalcy for their children, and developed a routine (going to school, returning and going to the

After School program, followed by physical activities with the LSU Kinesiology students until being picked up by parents), they were finally able to voice their needs (Smolen, 2009). Many of the parents expressed the need to construct a resume and not knowing how to use a computer (Smolen, 2009). With the help of several LSU students, not the study interviewees, we were able to assist in developing resumes for a few of the adults. In some cases, establishing an email account was a novel idea for many RV adults who voluntarily asked for help. However, these types of helpful activities did not reach the amount of adults who really needed them. Laura Jewett and I began to look for other LSU departments who were involved at RV. As it turned out, a professor of Social Work had been working at RV for a long time and had conducted sessions for a few adults at the Family Center, a trailer immediately parallel to the After School programs' trailer (Smolen, 2008). Dr. Carol Plummer was most welcoming and developed a partnership that allowed us to help her. This was another transition point in DEP's metamorphosis. From this point on, DEP regained its responsiveness as FEMA slowly began to prepare for an upcoming RV closure time.

Triptych Part Three: Deviation and Development

The final triptych stage in DEP's development consisted of the most amount of changes that took place in the smallest amount of time. Within the last two months of 2007 and spring-summer of 2008, DEP managed to work with RV children but also finally gained access to RV teenagers and adults. To gain a better sense of uncertainty and the type of atmosphere that surrounded the actual RV residents, it was worth the time and effort it took to recapture the official events of 2007 that led the way for DEP's new stage of adaptability in 2008.

Looming Displacement

In the very beginning of 2007, FEMA released an official statement to all FEMA-

sponsored trailer parks that the “official deadline for closure of the park is April 2007, with the agency leaders declaring that remaining trailer occupants would be evicted by that point,” (Barron, 2008, n.p.). Subsequently, the Airport 1, 2, 3 Parks, and other smaller trailer parks began to be closed down and, as a result, FEMA officials moved any lagging residents from those parks into RV (Barron, 2008). Neither residents nor FEMA met the aforementioned deadline for closure. As the months went by, rumors began to circulate about having to pay rent for living at RV (Smolen, 2007). The rumors turned out to be false; however, FEMA kept insisting that it would start charging rent if it would encouraged individuals to move out faster. As the stress levels of individuals rose, another factor came to light: formaldehyde levels in trailers were affecting the residents’ health. Press stories declared the extended exposure of the residents to the small releases of formaldehyde began to manifest their effects by causing headaches, fatigue, and many other symptoms. By the time summer months began, fliers and factsheets were distributed to each trailer outlining possible sources and effects, as well as a promise from FEMA to conduct field studies in trailer parks across Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama (Barron, 2008). As surveys were being conducted to assess the conditions of the RV population, other agencies used this time to research the demographics at the site.

Survey of remaining Renaissance Village residents finds more than 80 percent of households are below the poverty line. More than a third have no high school diploma, with 10 percent never completing eighth grade. Almost a third have some post-high school education. Two-thirds are unemployed (Barron, 2008, n.p.).

It was also in the spring months of 2006 that a fixed bus line, sponsored by FEMA, was established to and from RV (Barron, 2008; Dewan, 2008). With that in mind, FEMA encouraged residents to use the bus lines to begin searching for alternative housing options and employment opportunities in those areas (Smolen, 2007). However, what was not accounted for was the fact that those who sought out employment opportunities did not have a sufficient amount of time to

search for housing simultaneously. It was impossible for the residents to be able to look for both housing and employment without the additional help of transportation (Smolen, 2007).

Furthermore, the general complaint was about the high rental prices around the Baton Rouge area; the only affordable spaces were in areas that parents did not want their children to be (Barron, 2008).

In the summer months, many of the families began frantically looking for housing around the greater Baton Rouge metroplex, in many cases to no avail, while others managed to move out to unknown places. FEMA began to remove trailers when any family moved out of the park, limiting the possibility of their return but also disallowing FEMA from admitting anyone new (Smolen, 2007). However, by August and the second anniversary of Katrina, close to 500 trailers were still occupied and residents were using the majority of the services offered at the site (Barron, 2008). With such great number of occupants, more targeted services were needed. As a result, “Housing Services Center, the first of its kind, opens at the park,” (Barron, 2008, n.p.) to assist the residents in searching for new housing. In November 2007, a new closure date was announced: May 31, 2008 (Barron, 2008; Dewan, 2008; Smolen, 2007). The announcements were spread by taping loose sheets of paper, with the closure date and FEMA hotline number for any questions around RV. The date was established through assessments done by service providers with minimal amount of input from residents. The new date announcement spurred anxiety and consternation. “Renaissance residents hold a community meeting in Baker to demand a more responsive approach by FEMA and other federal agencies. FEMA responds by increasing the number of case workers on site,” (Barron, 2008, n.p.). Each caseworker was to help approximately 5 families at a time (Smolen, 2008). Upon asking the residents whether they’ve been able to talk to their caseworker, many answered that it was difficult to get a hold of

them over the phone and when conversations were held, they were brief and usually involved setting up appointments that never took place (Dewan, 2008; Smolen, 2008). Though not all individuals experienced such treatment, the general disenchantment with FEMA and their workers was seen and heard from all sides. By spring 2008, a continued sense of urgency to move out of the site was evident. Compiled with the rising issue of formaldehyde poisoning, the urgency to move out of RV became crucial to residents' health.

Citing high levels of formaldehyde in some travel trailers, the Center for Disease Control recommends remaining trailer residents seek alternative housing. The CDC reports that formaldehyde levels in 519 trailers in Louisiana and Mississippi were, on average, five times customary exposure levels. FEMA does not move to replace any trailers at Renaissance (Barron, 2008, n.p.).

By March the number of occupied trailers fell below 200 (Barron, 2008) and RV began to look like a patchwork of standing white trailers intermingled with mud spots where the trailers used to stand. Along with pipe connections stemming from the ground, signs that something there existed were permanent throughout RV. The scene appeared to me to add to the dislocation and anxiety of residents. As a Polish national, I often wondered if my government would treat its citizens in a similar manner. These kinds of comments dominated my field notes. April brought confirmation notices with the closure date: May 31st was going to be the final date of RV's existence.

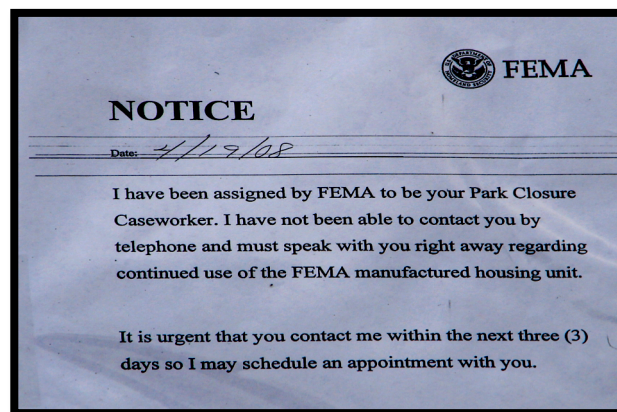


Figure 15. FEMA Caseworker's Attempt of Contact

Every existing trailer received another notice from FEMA caseworkers to establish contact and

proceed with moving out (Figure 15). Further, an increasing amount of meetings were organized for residents who expressed wanting to move back to New Orleans (Figure 16) and some parts of Baton Rouge. The crux of the meetings involved FEMA sponsoring transportation for the residents to move into new housing already found in New Orleans; and those wanting to use the service to move within the bounds of Baton Rouge were denied – it was not considered “moving back home” as defined by FEMA (Barron, 2008). The residents not only had to decipher the types of services FEMA offered but also in what capacity would the existing programs help them in this new displacement. Again, I was struck by the callous treatment of citizens by an arm of their government. Observations and field notes captured the rising anxiety of residents and the absurdity of such statement. I wondered how one ever moved home if the option simply didn’t exist? I also wondered how so many residents would ever simply move on with their lives.

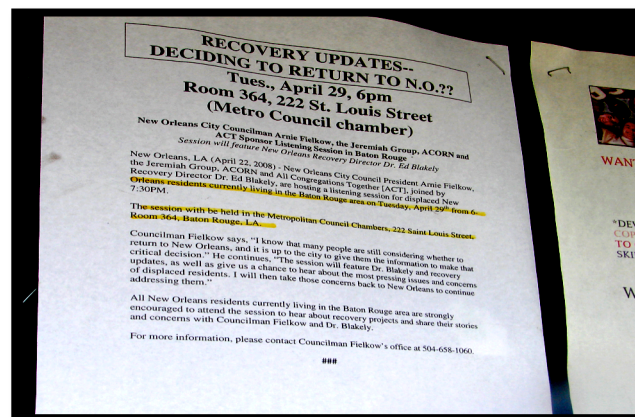


Figure 16. Recovery Efforts Updates

DEP’s Transitioning Role

In the fall months of 2007 DEP still did not have full access to the RV teenagers or adults. After the initial parent group was fired by LFRC staff once Rosie O’Donnell facilities opened, the access and information swap was stifled by the prevention to talk with residents by LFRC (Smolen, 2007). Parents were not allowed to walk, or loiter, around the After School

trailer once their children were inside engaged in the program. The only conversations sanctioned involved that of a school or after school program's absence reports or updates on a child's progress or absenteeism (Smolen, 2007). In many ways, this prevented DEP from keeping with the mission of the program, which was to improve LEAP scores. Having this as a main focus, it required many of the distractions to be eliminated, such as leisure conversations. DEP and EDUC 2000 students were also discouraged from talking to the children about topics other than education and their progress at school. The last 45 minutes of the after school program involved physical activities with LSU Kinesiology students and was the only time for real connections to be made. Seeing as DEP could do more as far as assisting in recovery, especially during this new phase of FEMA's insistence on moving residents out of RV, the new partnership was developed with the LSU Social Work Department with Dr. Carol Plummer.

As Carol Plummer had worked at RV for quite some time, having developed Teen Court program, where teenagers learn about the legal system and participate in trials for juveniles (Smolen, 2007), Plummer also started group therapy sessions for adults. Though not a large number of participants came to scheduled appointments, all showed up on regular basis. Upon further discussions and participant observations at these sessions, an agreement was reached in what capacity DEP could assist in the sessions. The official name of the program was "Building Strong Families" (Smolen, 2007), and together with Carol Plummer's guidance, educational activities were added to their program accompanied with health education and career-oriented information. The activities were to be held at the Family Center, a classroom trailer immediately facing the K-5 After School program trailer. Differing in décor from other trailers, it struck a more serious tone as to what could be taking place there. Where majority of the classroom trailers were enwrapped in blue backgrounds with fantastical animals, the Family Center was

enwrapped in a picture resembling a library bookshelf full of classic books (Smolen, 2007). Titles ranging from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *The Odyssey*, seemed to suggest that suspense and adventure were in the air. It was hard not to realize what we were trying to do at this juncture of DEP, was following the adventure book rhythm. Upon making the connection with Dr. Plummer's group of adults, DEP's mission was quickly gaining insight as to what was needed and wanted by the residents. Several parents suggested that some activities should be developed for RV young adults because after their small after school program in the old library trailer, they had nothing to do to productively occupy their time. The idea of RV newspaper run by RV children survived as long as Cowsar was still able to interact with the young adults; once LFRC took over such activities were ceased (Smolen, 2007). The idea of developing an extension to 'Building Strong Families' came to fruition in the middle of November 2007: Teen Fun Night. The programming was already taking place at the Family Center where other smaller agencies conducted their operations, including Catholic Charity, etc. Carol Plummer and Laura Jewett sought out a partnership with Catholic Charities to help in Teen Fun Night. They happily agreed.

Embarking upon small advertising efforts, 22 teens showed up for the program, some truly interested, others admittedly having nothing to do, while others simply followed their friends (Smolen, 2007). Together with two official LSU professors, three Social Work graduate students, Catholic Charity staff who brought snacks (usually Subway subs and cookies, while we brought drinks) and \$10 gift cards for a raffle for participants of the program as an incentive for continued participation, the first Teen Fun Night program turned into a successful pilot session (Smolen, 2007, 2008). At the end of the session, teens were encouraged to make a list of all activities that they were interested in doing, most involved playing games and watching movies (Smolen, 2007). Another Teen Fun Night was organized the following LSU semester used those

two Teen Fun Night sessions as a model and guideline of what the teenagers wanted us to include in the program.

Subversion by Diversion

With the constantly looming closure date of RV Park, 2008 spring prompted all programs to prepare for final stages of their programming and finally, closure. LFRC began gathering their final data, claiming over 60 RV students participating in the program when no more than 20 children attended on daily basis (Smolen, 2008). As parents had begun to slowly leave the premises for the past year, the number of participants in after school activities strangely remained undiminished. However it was becoming clear that activities would discontinue once the school year came to an end if not earlier. At the end of the fall of 2007, Sinsonte left RV and Louisiana to graduate from Major West Coast institution. In the meantime, the Big Buddy program increasingly became involved in joint efforts with City Year, who continued their mentoring and tutoring efforts at the Baker schools and at RV, as well as LFRC. The partnership with Big Buddy was not a new connection for LSU as a previous connection had been made. Thus, this new collaboration did not present difficulties as far as sharing facilities or students. Communication seemed easy and natural with these entities. Moreover, Big Buddy staff highly encouraged research opportunities and assisted in data collection (Smolen, 2008).

The connection with Major West Coast institution, though rocky, still persisted. The original West Coast program staff still requested data as well as assistance and sharing of the collected data. However, when asked in return to share the data gathered by Sinsonte, the responses came with empty promises (Smolen, 2008). However, the idea to determine the general education progress of RV children over the course of the past two years struck all parties involved as a valuable topic of research. The biggest challenge proved to be getting consent

forms signed by parents and/or guardians of the children involved. The battle with the LFRC staff to agree upon a consent form and their distribution proved negative and wasted over 4 months and eventually resulted in no data collected under that particular IRB (Smolen, 2008). The biggest impediment was getting access to parents; considering that they had been asked not to interfere with their children's education and programming staff, and asked not to talk to LSU staff, seeking their help all of a sudden seemed an unusual request (Smolen, 2008). As the sense of ending increased, so did my angst at accomplishment. It was communicated multiple times to the LFRC staff that informal interviews would be conducted with parents of the children about the program itself. Such requests were categorically denied. However, with Building Strong Families and Teen Fun Night organized, several of the parents and children who attended both programs were willing to give interviews and share their perspectives. I access and consoled myself that at least some of the RV residents' voices would be heard.

In the spring semester of 2008, the LSU students continued to work at the After School K-5 trailer and with the younger kids. The kinesiology students continued to provide valuable physical activities for everyone involved. However, as months passed, a progressively smaller amount of children could be seen participating in the program and playing on the playground. The number of teens present at Teen Fun Night did not dwindle, while LFRC reported their numbers were declining (Smolen, 2008). The teens' participation during the majority of the semester never fell below 15 teens until beginning of April when families were truly moving out (Smolen, 2008). Some of the participants were those still from the tent days, and they were surprised and expressed amazement that LSU was still working at RV. Having explained to them that our help was allocated to the younger kids' trailer where there was an apparent need for our presence, they said they knew that they were being isolated from other services due to their

behavior issues (Smolen, 2008). However, having finally found a new place to “hang out,” they wanted to focus on having fun in a space away from their siblings (Smolen, 2008).

The program for teens was divided into several different workstations. The partnership with Social Work allowed for diverse types of activities to be held. The agenda loosely resembled as follows:

- 6:00 – 6:15 Welcome and attendance taken and agenda presented to the participants
- 6:15 – 6:30 Group activity led by Social Work staff
- 6:30 – 7:15 Workstations/Workshops
- 7:15 – 7:30 Snacks from Catholic Charities and raffle
- 7:30 – 7:45 Cleanup

Considering that the partnership with Major West Coast institution was still present, one of the stations was a digital stories station. However, this time Carol Plummer took it upon herself to conduct the digital stories since she had experience with this concept and was willing to develop them with the adult groups rather than with the teens. During the semester, Plummer developed several stories but the most touching story was of one RV resident who touched everyone’s heart: Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Harvey was in his 60s when we met, and with an aggressive form of bone cancer, which made him frail; doctors made him wear a plastic body suit that he claimed was his Superman uniform (Smolen 2008). Shortly after RV’s closure, Mr. Harvey passed away and his digital story was the main feature at his wake (Smolen, 2008). None of the digital stories from the adult group session were used for data, but they served in other areas no one could have expected. Mr. Harvey’s story being featured at his wake was one example.

The teens themselves admitted to not be interested in working on these stories because

other people had tried and it was too time-consuming. They claimed they wanted to enjoy themselves with the company present (Smolen, 2008). The workstation remained open and accessible but with limited amount of interest. I noted more interest was dedicated to playing around on the laptops, visiting sites or checking email and facebook. The workstation that I led was called the “Game Station.” With my box of supplies, I felt as though I was back to the tent days. Together again with art supplies, dominoes, and board games and cards, I began to determine their interest. As it turned out, most teens never played board games or interactive games such as Pictionary (Smolen, 2008). The game quickly became popular. The following Teen Fun Nights were a popular addition to the dwindling services provided at RV.

Upon hearing about the new program, the LFRC staff attended one of the sessions to see what the excitement was all about. As my station was the loudest, they called for RV security to help in controlling the noise levels and monitor the behavior (Smolen, 2008). Despite the fact that the noise levels were a consequence of teams’ loud discussions, teammates drawings and shouting while guesses were exchanged, it was considered noise that needed to be quenched. The security guards were thanked and assured that everything was under control, however the LFRC staff was not appeased. To them, it seemed that our program was unorganized and needed the security guards to keep everyone in check. Taking their suggestion under advisement, I included the guards into each Pictionary team and mandated their participation. In my final analysis, I determined that this was the first documented time since tent activities that the security guards interacted with the teens in an informal fashion (Smolen, 2008). Guards participated in a few more Teen Fun Night sessions and later admitted to not being needed due to our staff having a good sense of control. Seeing that their help was no longer considered in the new programming, the LFRC staff became increasingly cold, which was manifested by the limited amount of

sharing data (Smolen, 2008). Data indicated that the teens' demeanor also differed when the LFRC staff was present and when it was not: with their staff there, the teens acted more subdued, participated less, and less like themselves. They were constantly reprimanded for not using the right language, not following directions, noise levels, loitering, not sitting down when asked, not standing up when asked, not considering their neighbor, not listening to LSU staff, not listening to their peers' answers, not doing the activity right, not taking advantage of opportunities, but most of all – creating havoc and not being appreciative of what we were trying to do (Smolen, 2008). Our insistence that the program was to be conducted in an informal setting, which allowed for a lot of the above noted behaviors to be allowed, did not seem to matter. It was after the LFRC staff left that the teens began to relax and spoke their minds. Relating to DEP, most of the day RV kids spent in school was structured with mandated discipline. After school programs were exactly like school but where staff helped students with homework. RV kids were tired of such structured environments and needed a place to be themselves (Smolen, 2008). This was particularly true given the limited home space, LSU staff was cognizant of this and consciously made allowances for this; LFRC did not. In particular, the game, Pictionary, was a useful way for RV children to let go and have fun. Through these games, DEP was rebuilding trust with the teens that it had lost.

Though Pictionary was popular especially among girls, boys wanted to play UNO. Their games were aggressive and competitive. Seeing as how I could play, many of the teens wanted me to play at their table. During these games several subjects about school and their personal lives emerged. For example, one of the boys playing, Greg (pseudonym), attended the tent activities and remembered me from that time. Greg was in Special Education and had a severe learning disability. My field note data indicated that the other boys consistently made fun of him

for being “handicapped” (Smolen, 2008). Curiously, I asked them if they knew the difference between handicapped and learning disabilities as well as the purpose of Special Education. Most admitted to not having a complete understanding of it, and once it was explained, they were quick to apologize to Greg and began suggesting to him how they deal with their difficulties at school themselves (Smolen, 2008). My field notes indicated that they even let Greg win that game. Similar conversations about clarifying complicated concepts were conducted on regular basis. Soon several boys began to discuss their troublesome subjects at school and issues at home. With the closure date for RV approaching, many of the teens worried about where they were going to end up and if they would be able to stay in touch with their RV friends and maintain these relationships. Sensing an opportune moment, we took DEP cameras and asked them to create an album or movie of things they would miss. The movies were compiled and distributed to all their friends. Unfortunately, the parents of the teens were unable to be reached and therefore consent forms were not signed, and thus these materials could not be used in this study, but they remained a valuable memento of that chapter in the lives of these teenagers and a memento to be cherished.

By April 2008 all programs were organizing their final agendas. FEMA’s proclamation that May 31st was to be the final date of operation brought most people into frenzied responses. With the final LEAP test approaching, kinesiology students were asked not to come so as to use the extra after school program time to further test preparation. With more worksheets at their disposal than ever before, the children began to get mock tested. By the time LEAP testing was over, the children almost stopped attending due to bigger issues occupying their minds: moving out (Smolen, 2008). The LSU students continued to come and engage the kids on the playground. On May 1st the After-School K-5 programming officially ceased operations. Despite

the promises that were made in January by Renard about staying open and helping all the families of children who loyally participated in the program until the closure of RV, the operations ended earlier due to insufficient number of participants (Smolen, 2008). Though the full scope of reasons was unbeknownst to me, the number of participant-reason were communicated to me during informal conversations with City Year staff, which also ceased operations at that time as well. By May, DEP was the only education program at the site.

The Building Strong Families group, also commonly now known as the Adult Group, began to take on a more serious tone. With the new levels of uncertainty, having a stable support group proved to be extremely beneficial to the participating residents. As the date was approaching, the Family Center was also turned into a place where FEMA information was being distributed in leaflet and flier forms. Residents clamored inside on a daily basis to get new information. In many instances, the Adult groups were being distracted due to people passing in and out. An idea came about to have more informal meetings at some of the participants' trailers (Figure 17). This allowed for DEP to see the real side of their living conditions. For the most part the residents displayed embarrassment by their living conditions, but many also felt that people needed to know what they were forced to deal with over the course of their stay. With continued efforts to build a relationship with the participants, and the ease of conversation flow, many of the adults wanted to participate and help with Teen Fun Night, which was conducted immediately following the Adult Group session. This proved to be successful when conducting story swap activities, where older and younger generations exchanged their views on school experiences and other areas of their lives (Smolen, 2008).



Figure 17. Building Strong Families/Adult Group Session

Final Countdown

The beginning of May 2008 marked more families who moved out of RV. Increasingly and on a more frequent basis, FEMA eliminated trailers from the site once families moved out. The site was beginning to show signs of being overused (Figure 18). With trampled paths between trailers, overgrown grass in other spots, and certain leftover trailers showing outlines of rust, RV was showing signs of aging. The outline trees became the main frame of RV as opposed to the prominent barbed wire fence. The sea of white trailers was quickly reduced to small sprinkles of white along the grey gravel road. For the first time, it was possible to see from one end of RV to the other. I was finally able to see the true distance along which the trailers were originally set up. The big white tent was eliminated that March leaving a giant patch in the middle of RV; now the temporary mailboxes were the main line of focus. The children and families did not wonder the premises as they used to and the entire area felt desolate, discarded, and forsaken.



Figure 18. Dotted Landscape

Though the numbers of teens decreased to ten, they still came to the only place that held any activities that were age appropriate for them. At that point, they requested watching movies as one of potential activities since some of their parents had to sell their TVs to have enough money for the move (Smolen, 2008). Well-spent \$5 movies from Walmart proved to be an amazing source. In the effort to make this educational; I chose movies that were from the 1990s and classics. *Jumanji* was a huge hit, and especially when some of the teens realized that the movie was made the year that they were born. Critique ensued as to the quality of animation and action scenes and what was inaccurate as far as animal behavior, which contributed to a more enlightening experience on my part, I suspect, than theirs. They knew more about animators and producers and major milestones in the animation world than I ever knew (Smolen, 2008). Considering that Catholic Charities also had to stop engaging with our program due to funding, their efforts now were more targeted at helping the families find furniture and appliances for their new locations (Barron, 2008; Dewan, 2008; Smolen, 2008), the movies became substitutes for \$10 gift cards and were more memorable prizes. At the time, both Adult Group and Teen Fun Night began to merge into one group since the teens no longer had the after school program to attend. Teens migrated to the only program that still existed. The last Teen Fun Night took place

on May 22nd with only one last teen, Leo (pseudonym), who recently moved to the Baker area together with his five siblings, mother, and aunt. He took the bus back to RV to see if any of his friends remained and stopped by the Family Center to check if we were there (Smolen, 2008). Seeing his disappointed look that everyone had gone left a feeling of sadness that RV was truly closing and I would not see many of these children ever again. My field notes recorded this and other signs of closure. It was closure for RV but without closure for the teen residents. However, adults were still plentiful on site.

The adults who participated in the Adult Group were elderly, infirm, and sometimes mentally challenged individuals, all who on their own were not able to seek housing or know where to begin. Their FEMA caseworkers were slow in response or never emerged in their conversations when asked how their planning of departure was going (Smolen, 2008). Some admitted that church groups were helping them in finding suitable lodging while others claimed not being able to go anywhere due to lack of transportation and conflict with current employment giving them time to look. Over the course of the following weeks, Jewett and I drove around with several residents checking out several housing options whether they were to their liking and whether the neighborhoods were safe. Sister Judith Brun, the one who was involved in recovery efforts since the beginning of Katrina response, began to also recruit other social workers and volunteers to help the remaining residents find housing (Smolen, 2008).

The Homeless Alliance and the Community Initiatives Foundation, directed by Sister Judith, are part of a small consortium of agencies that is trying to keep those ineligible for FEMA assistance from becoming the homeless. Their clients include more than 200 households, and ineligible people continue to materialize (Dewan, 2008, n.p.).

In the course of one week, Jewett and I helped at least three residents, driving around Baton Rouge and its surrounding areas, who were seeking housing. Seeking options and marking which ones suited them, they informed Sister Judith. Many of the residents who found

themselves still at RV were going through the process of claiming disability or sought other government support, all of which were taking a protracted amount of time (Smolen, 2008). In some cases, due to the processing times, the RV residents would lose their chosen apartment, resulting in restarting the search for more options. By the middle of May 2008, FEMA was moving all remaining RV residents into local Baton Rouge hotels in order to meet the closing date (Dewan, 2008; Smolen, 2008). May 31st was met with false assumptions spread to the public as to all RV residents being able to find proper housing. The reality painted a different picture, a surreal portrait of how badly these US citizens had been dealt with and ultimately, treated.

Many of the remaining families with children were moved into hotels where FEMA paid for their stay for the duration of the summer (Smolen, 2008). During this time, the families were expected to find further housing options. Most of the hotels and motels chosen by FEMA were located in less affluent locations around Baton Rouge and Baker areas, many of these places were nowhere near bus lines, and no playgrounds for children. The hotels found themselves with constantly keeping an eye on the sudden flood of kids playing in their pool and being unable to clean individual rooms due to overflow of the newcomers' belongings cluttering every corner (Smolen, 2008). Clearly, hotels were meant for temporary occupancy, not a living space. Though some of the hotel rooms rented were bigger than the trailers, most families, once again, found themselves in a temporary place with new uncertainties hovering, and not having lost another series of support groups and services, their work to sort out their surroundings began anew. Some individuals remained in the hotel rooms until the end of 2008 (Smolen, 2009). Others, who did move into apartments, lost them due to high rent rates or were never able to have electricity

turned on due to not being able to afford to pay the bill (Dewan, 2008). The vicious cycle of uncertainty, displacement, and despair, continued.

DEP was able to follow several of the adults from the Adult Group in how they fared during this displacement. One of them actually moved near LSU to keep up the contact with DEP's staff, and we regularly met on the same bus going toward campus, me to my classes, him to look for fliers for part time jobs. Another RV resident managed to move back to New Orleans into her house that she owned before the storm; however, for a long time her efforts to rebuild and restore her property were met by consistent contractor fraud, which included stolen money and building materials (Smolen, 2008). Such circumstances were not unheard of in the duration of the past several years, newspapers constantly reported on Katrina fraud and the unfortunate cases of individuals who fell victim to such activity. Another former RV resident bought a car with the help of FEMA money, which turned out to be bought a Katrina-car (Oldenburg, 2006)—a car that was flooded by the storm, someone dried it out and refurbished it to look presentable and now sold it for profit—the car was rusting from the inside out and only worked for of a few weeks before the mold and rust ate the entire engine (Smolen, 2008).

However, the biggest question on DEP staff's mind was, "Where were the families of the children who participated in DEP and the After-School program now located?" We had hopes to perhaps be able to continue working with those children who remained in the area. Luckily several locations were found due to conversations held with hotel-ridden residents, those from Adult Group but also from the leftover service providers, but one was particularly interesting.

New Locations, New Opportunities, New Roles

In the Fall 2008, a new partnership was developed with a private faith-based, non-profit, all African American boys, boarding, secondary school called, Desire Street Academy (DSA)

(Smolen, 2008). The original DSA was located in New Orleans as an after school program at the local community center, after Katrina the program dissipated but through the efforts of the DSA staff, many of the former program participants got back in touch. Danny Wuerffel, a Heisman winner and former football quarterback, wanting to help a worthy cause, completely sponsored DSA and its mission. After developing a full contact list and helping individuals rally, together with DSA staff they established their new site in Pleasantville, Florida, with a 99% Caucasian population. Needless to say, the all African American school did not seem to fit well into their new surroundings. They moved their entire staff, students and families into the Baton Rouge area. In the fall of 2008, they registered 120 African American boys, a majority of whom had lived through the Katrina experience. Seeing as their type of program was also needed by the local neighborhood, they agreed to admit a certain percentage of locals into their program. Considering that this school was also a boarding school, all boys were allowed to go home on weekends and holidays, therefore during-the-week after school programming was feasible to organize.

DSA followed a four-pronged instructional impact model aimed at outcomes of spiritual, physical, academic, and personal growth. Upon discussion with the DSA principal and vice-principal, our contributions would target mostly personal growth. Being sponsored by a renowned football player, the physical aspect of their mission was covered by an extensively developed physical education program (Smolen, 2008). The main focus area was football and basketball, however there was not enough time allotted to discuss motivation theory, nutrition, and other aspects of athletics due to time. Therefore, involving the LSU COE Kinesiology department once again into DEP's efforts seemed a logical choice. Soon an extension to their individual sports drills was developed called Muscle Mondays. Together with another graduate

student, I helped organize the majority of the activities. In the duration of the semester, we managed to bring the DSA students on campus several times to expose them to campus life but also to show them various career options. The EDUC 2000 class continued its service-learning efforts at DSA also in the “personal growth” area of DSA’s mission, however focusing on career building and future planning as well (Smolen, 2008).

Most of the students there did not realize that college could be considered as an option for them due to their lack of income and family experience with post-secondary education. Having LSU students discuss with them government funding, including filling out FAFSA forms, was completely novel. Seeing as some of them wanted to explore other career options outside of the sports field, having college students readily available to help them maneuver through the application forms and finding out information on what was needed, but most of all helping them ask the right question to the admission’s staff of various colleges, proved to be most helpful (Smolen, 2008). Showing them that their idea of becoming a vet or sport’s nutritionist was neither ridiculous nor impossible and was rewarding.

Meanwhile, as the activities at DSA were being conducted and in response to what the students needed and wanted, another partnership was developing on the side with East Baton Rouge Acceleration Academy (EBRAA). This was a school for over-aged students who chose to complete their high school diploma. Their Community Liaison, an LSU graduate and an continued immense LSU fan, sought out help from COE to assist in any capacity possible. DEP happily responded to the call. By spring of 2009, tutoring and mentoring was taking place at EBRAA twice a week, similarly to that of DSA. However, EBRAA was less inclined on the focus of physical activities, rather on career development. By the end of spring semester, DSA had to close due to budgetary reasons. Most of the boys enrolled in local schools or managed to

return to New Orleans. Three of the boys with whom we worked with and who graduated enrolled at LSU. The last semester of official the DEP operation was fall of 2009, where a very close partnership continued with EBRAA.

Conclusion

The Delta Express Program was clearly not a static entity. The presentation of the different morphing phases, the composite of three: Initial stage, Turning point and Final role, was necessary to describe the various stages of DEP's development and provided perceptions of those who were involved in the process. This chronological journey was necessary to understand how and why our roles evolved into various entities as well as portrayed the extent of help provided and the obstacles along the journey. Despite the perception by some that DEP was a haphazard program, as depicted by Thomas (2011), there were several elements that emerged as valuable lessons from the experience. The purpose of this study was to examine elements of culturally relevant post-disaster education programming, yet also to explore the possibilities of establishing a blue print for establishing culturally relevant post-disaster programming adaptable for other contexts. However, it is important to depict where cultural relevance was most prominent and significant in DEP's transmutation. From the first stage, it became evident that cultural relevance emerged from the requests made by the RV residents and our ability to accommodate those needs. By including their conversations and ideas DEP became a responsive program as opposed to reactive. The continued participation of parents in activity planning was crucial to maintain relationships but also mission. The second stage differed in that cultural relevance was addressed through the structure of EDUC 2000 course. It was in this stage that the needs of LSU students were being met through in-class activities and hands-on experiences provided through the service-learning component of going to RV. With the new supplemental

role that DEP assumed at the Rosie O'Donnell facilities, and an increased amount of LSU students from New Orleans and the same social circles, cultural relevance was addressed to this particular audience. The study interviewees made it clear that meeting their needs of RV residents and helping them while they struggled to make sense of their surroundings was significant for them in their development. The last stage of DEP's development, cultural relevance reemerged in the form of re-addressing the needs of RV residents, particularly adults and youth. By seeking alternative partnerships, in the case with LSU Social Work, DEP expanded its range of responsive activities that were previously limited by LFRC's hegemonic power. Consequently, the development of "Building Strong Families" and "Teen Fun Night" DEP was a response to the lacking programming for those particular populations. Having gone back to the initial form of program development – interest inventories and needs assessments – DEP was able to, once again, widen the scope of activities that were culturally relevant and responsive, as opposed to prescriptive and rigid.

Chapter 6: Pictorial Miniatures in Surrealism Context

Pictorial Analysis

Another method of triangulating data gathered to determine the cultural responsiveness of programmatic planning implemented at RV and to gauge the premises of RV residents themselves was to examine artifacts referred to as pictorial representations. Since RV's opening in October 2005 until its closure in May 2008, the RV site went through stages of development similar to DEP. However, in this case the RV residents themselves were responsible for many of the changes. As mentioned previously, FEMA consistently reminded the evacuees that RV was meant to serve as a temporary site while recovery efforts continued until it was time for residents to move back to New Orleans. Despite the predictions of FEMA officials, RV remained open for a much longer period of time than initially expected. During this time, the RV residents, some traumatized to a greater degree than others based on their actual evacuation and loss experiences, came to perceive RV as their new home. In an effort to embrace their new surroundings and bring order to their shattered lives, many changes ensued in the effort to make RV their new home. Thus, cultural elements began to emerge over time. Some of these elements were more prominent than others.

Seeing as textual descriptions would not suffice on their own, pictorial representations were selected as data sources to illustrate the development of cultural sightings but also to illuminate aspects of cultural adaptability through the development of community at RV. I had over 1,000 pictures collected over the period of three and a half years. Coding all images and then sifting through the coded images and grouping them according to themes, then selecting themed pictures to determine best specimens of a particular aspect was a time consuming process. Taking into consideration the very amorphous definition of culture (Geertz, 2000),

seeking pictures that portrayed culture as it emerged and represented New Orleans culture, was rather difficult; however identifying signs of community and how the evacuees managed to overcome FEMA's stringent rules as to the temporariness of the site, in turn led my selection of images to be used in this chapter. My lens as Polish woman, doctoral student, new to Louisiana helped in this process. However, my lens of experience and frames of reference also allowed me to view these pictorial representations in a very singular way: I looked for those images that best illustrated how residents of RV brought "home" to their cramped, congested living spaces, using what they themselves had taught me about what it meant to be from New Orleans as a final sifting and selection process. The majority of those pictures presented will be framed as their own miniature triptychs to portray the progression of individual elements or a series of elements under the same theme. Following the presentation of interviewees' responses, I will use the same subsections for this pictorial analysis as used in chapter 5.

Moreover, the use of the images to construct individual thematic collages follows the surreal idea of exposing what lay beneath in the subconscious enculturation of the RV site. Focusing on cultural elements and community was a conscious effort, and one that I freely acknowledge that many surrealists would not entirely believe in and espouse. Picking a particular focus as to what was to emerge does not follow the surrealist ideology. In true surrealism themes emerge by themselves after surrealist methodology of reaching the subconscious such as automatic writing was applied. However, with such a plethora of images available, an analysis of all pictures and what themes could emerge from them deserves its own oeuvre. Therefore, using one of the surrealist techniques, collage, to follow this line of research, I attempted to expose the underlying subversion of RV circumstance to create a sense of community that was the focus of this particular section.

First Impressions to Their Lasting Effect on the Site

As mentioned in the aesthetics of the ride section in chapter 5, the approach to RV caused great consternation for any Katrina affected person and service providers. Seeing individuals from one of the oldest and renowned cities in the world being resettled into a rural piece of land where its immediate neighbors included the Jetson Juvenile correction facility and cows was disturbing, akin to a visual onslaught that was difficult to comprehend and accept as reality. The amount of security at the beginning of RV's existence gave a false impression of the people inside being either dangerous in great need of extreme protection from the dangers beyond the fence, or needing to be contained (Smolen, 2007). Having crossed the gate and bypassed its gatekeepers, one treaded into the sea of white on white trailers (Jetson, 2011), as depicted by the first section of Figure 19 below. With recently mowed grass and regularly spaced trailers, the image was overwhelming, and in its enormity, it was not difficult to lose count of how many trailers followed each other and spread over the horizon. With over 500 trailers, all occupied by over 2,500 evacuees (Barron, 2008), signs of individualism were scarce. The only differences were in the commercial names and identifying models of the trailers themselves (Smolen, 2007). With sparse white gravel pathways as main separators of major trailer sectors and barely visible alphabetic signs to indicate specific trailer row, an individual was theoretically supposed to be able to locate where they were in the park. This proved to be a difficult task in itself.



Figure 19. Development of Renaissance Village Site

After few months of occupancy, the residents insisted on proper asphalt roads to help preserve cars as well as provide faster and easier ways for fire trucks to drive through RV to the trailers in need (Smolen, 2007). The paved roads shown in part two of the Figure 19 triptych, portrays the end result of paved arteries weaving through RV, but still leaving the white gravel to provide contrast to the new addition. In the last year of RV, these arteries were mostly used by FEMA workers and employed partners to eliminate trailers after families vacated the premises (part three in Figure 19). Though the pavement of the roads was a cause of great consternation and expense for FEMA at the beginning, it proved to be a vital element in providing services (Smolen, 2008). After a majority of trailers were removed from the site, it was only then that the extent of smaller gravel capillaries that connected the different rows was disclosed and uncovered. With once a month mowing service, many more secrets were revealed as to what lied beneath the overgrown grass, such as extensive conventional graffiti (Keats, 2008) on utility connections, indicating who was there along with their trailer letter and number. Graffiti is usually associated with challenging authority, political undertones, and famously with vandalism, but it is also associated with creativity, and to some, constitutes an urban art form (Keats, 2008; Lachmann, 1988). The writings and drawings on leftover pipes bulging out of the ground could also be associated with silent rebellion that the ideology of graffiti adheres to in modern times (Keats, 2008; Lachmann, 1988). None of the signs on piping were New Orleans gang related (Smolen, 2008). The issue of roads and walkways is important in the development of links between individuals among trailers, rows, and sectors. Without such accessibility and connectivity other cultural elements could not have emerged.

Cultural Elements

One of the most indicative cultural elements in Southern and New Orleans culture is the ability for individuals to gather and come together (Wayne, 2011). The ability to congregate is significant to share stories, pray, and especially, to visit. It is a cultural way of being pronounced in the South, especially among those of African American ancestry. I learned over the time spent at RV and while meeting people from Louisiana, that nothing could be done without proper “visiting” taking place, including what I term as “greeting rituals.” When meeting new people from New Orleans, one of the first questions asked is always, “What high school did you go to?” This immediately indicates place, what socio-economic status you are, educational background, and your perspectives on community. Further, any meeting or encounter has to include a certain amount of time discussing family, weather, and perhaps LSU football. Those who did not adhere to these rules were immediately deemed as socially awkward, labeled as “from the North” or foreign. With the help of Sister Judith Brun and her contribution of the community white tent (featured in the background of part two of Figure 20), RV residents were able to come together to visit but also to share information, stories, and especially experiences of Katrina (part one of Figure 19) (Smolen, 2006). Being able to congregate as a social activity as, well as share what has later been referred to as Katrina Stories, emerged as important cultural activities. And as mentioned previously, this brought a sense of “home” to the RV residents-the ability to find one another. The white tent also served as one of the sites for service providers to find residents and gather research about participants. In some instances, RV residents were given \$20 Wal-Mart gift certificates for their participation in studies (Smolen, 2007). Residents willing to participate swarmed the white tent. Having a place to gather was extremely important for the development of a sense of community. A majority of church groups and choir practices, as well as RV council

meetings were held in that tent, until the installation of Rosie O'Donnell's facilities, meetings could be held in the Family Center (Smolen, 2007, 2008).



Figure 20. Elements of Culture

Another significant element that contributed to residents making RV their home was planting flowers and adopting pets. In the first year of RV, FEMA refused residents to dig in the ground surrounding the trailers (Smolen, 2006). Together with DEP staff and RV parents, we tried to organize a community garden only to be shut down by FEMA; no federal ground was to be unnecessarily dug or defiled (Smolen, 2006). As a response, many of the residents, and DEP, planted seeds in portable plant pots; some of the residents cut out the bottoms of the pots and dug the ground upon which the pots were set on, for the plant to have access to regular soil yet to FEMA it looked as though the plants were limited to the pot itself (Smolen, 2006). Introduction of pets to the park was not an easy transition. FEMA restricted the types of pets that could be owned on the premises. Pitbulls, German Sheppards, Dobermans, and other bigger breeds were not allowed for the fear of dog fighting rings to develop (Smolen, 2007). The dog featured in the third part of Figure 20 named Taz for Tasmanian Devil, though small, was a vicious companion of one of the Adult Group participants. He bit several people, myself included, but was an accepted breed to have on the premises. Just before leaving RV the owner of Taz was forced to euthanize him for being too dangerous to the surroundings, as deemed by the vet who finally got a chance to inspect him for shots (Dewan, 2008). However, during his owner's time at RV, the

dog provided companionship that was badly needed at the time. Many other residents also adopted pets. The most common ones, however, were local wild cats that seemed to be breeding like rabbits (Smolen, 2008). With many crawfish boils organized by residents, the leftovers often attracted wildlife but cats seemed to dominate the scene. Though cats kept mice and rats at bay, dogs were primarily used to keep other residents from breaking and entering the trailers. It was not uncommon for break-ins to happen. The locks on the trailer doors were flimsy, and could be picked by any credit card or hairpin; as a result burglary occurrences were common. This contributed to the long list of issues that RV residents communicated as one of their main concerns.

Frequently Discussed Topics

With every visit to RV, news would circulate as to who was broken into and what has been taken (Smolen, 2007). At times it would be jewelry, such as wedding rings, other times it would be electronics (Smolen, 2008). The reward signs (Figure 21 part one) were a frequently circulated signage around RV, and most of the time posted on community announcement boards that were located at the main gate, mailboxes, and inside the Family Center. In some cases, items were returned due to the site being so small that everyone knew what everyone possessed, but the majority of the time once items were stolen they were quickly disposed of and never recovered (Smolen, 2008). Usually FEMA sought help from the Baker police department when individuals were identified, making police and also fire department cars a common sight. The issue of locks was resolved by allowing residents to install additional locks and bolts on their doors (Smolen, 2007). This provided an additional sense of security. However, such criminal acts were not the only topic of concern. The availability of transportation in case of an emergency was a reemerging topic throughout the duration of RV.

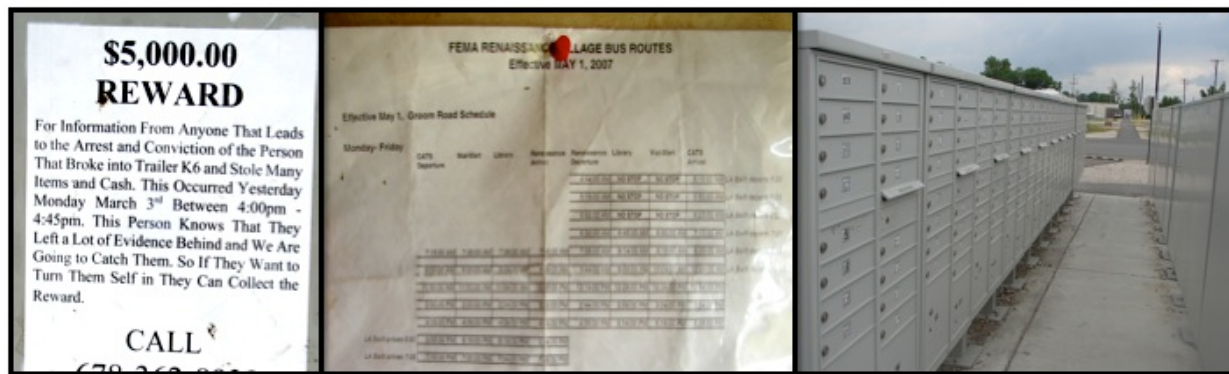


Figure 21. Topics of Discussion

Considering that the majority of evacuees who found themselves in these circumstances were those who, from the very beginning, did not have means of transportation, it was hard to suggest to them alternative means of transportation. In 2007, FEMA finally implemented a bus line that allowed for the residents to travel to the local Wal-Mart and Baker library (Barron, 2008; Smolen, 2007). Those were the only two stops (Figure 21, part two). Though this provided a solution to a certain extent, it did not solve the issue if one needed to go to the hospital or get to a transit station to change bus lines. Residents still had to rely on newly made friends and neighbors who had cars. By the middle of 2006, FEMA realized that the site was open for a long time, and the residents would have to receive mail if they truly hoped to get jobs, receive bills, etc. It was agreed upon with the local Baker United States Post Office branch to establish temporary mailboxes for the residents (Smolen, 2006). Initially, those boxes were placed at the local post office building, however, since a majority of the residents did not have transportation or were too infirm to walk the mile and a half to get to the site; these mailboxes were moved onto RV site by 2007 (Figure 21, part three). Having mail delivered to RV, provided many individuals with an additional stability factor allowing for a faster turnover of many necessary forms such as applications for jobs, FEMA recovery financial help, Road Home program applications, taxes, and many other types of mail. Having a tangible address helped the residents regain a piece of

their identity. Following the placement of mailboxes, the residents were encouraged to make their trailers and surroundings more home-like. In some cases, the service providers assisted in responding to their reaffirmation of cultural identity through several activities. In juxtaposition, residents discussed how those who did return to New Orleans to trailers placed on home lots were encouraged to beautify trailers, in fact, the locale New Orleans newspaper, the *Times-Picayune*, even offered a contest for the “Most Beautiful FEMA Trailer,” “The Most Original FEMA trailer,” “Message to Ponder Award,” “Southern Magic Award,” and many others (Peck, 2006).

Culturally Responsive

In the first year of RV’s existence FEMA repeatedly and vehemently insisted that residents were not to make themselves too comfortable at the site; RV was designed as a temporary site. However, after the first year it became clear that recovery efforts were not taking the desired government turn as hoped, evacuees were residing at RV for a longer time (Smolen, 2007). With that in mind, services which were operating at the site for that past year, began to design initiatives and activities that were more focused on the culture of New Orleans in an effort to make people more comfortable. With church groups entering the site on a regular basis now, additional locks on doors for better sense of security, mailboxes on site, and bus route to a grocery store—basic needs, as defined by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs (Henniger, 2002), have been fulfilled. It was now time to address higher order needs. One of the most visible results from an activity, were newly developed row signs. City Year conducted this activity in 2007 with all the participating RV children (Smolen, 2007). The objective of the activity was to name each row using the appropriate letter with a word that reminds them of New Orleans (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Signs of Culture

Upon analysis, a majority of the words chosen were related to themes of music and famous contributors to New Orleans culture. For example, F for “Funk,” historically relates to the music style first developed in New Orleans. However, the first sighting of the word “funk” also relates to how the city smelled back in 1800, since no proper sewage system existed and with consistent flooding, the feces tended to emerge at every corner of the city, especially where the slaves lived (Sublette, 2009). Another example is R for “Rebirth.” Rebirth is related to the brass band of the same name (Rebirth Brass Band, n.d.). With the increasing amount of New Orleans elements emerging at the site, more audience-targeted elements also began to emerge.

Responsiveness Concerning RV Children

When the evacuees were first getting settled in their trailers, the grass did not fully cover the grounds between the trailers, the spaces between trailers was covered in white gravel. When Rosie O’Donnell’s classroom trailers were first laid on the arid grounds, standing on concrete blocks (Smolen, 2007) (Figure 23, part one), the uncertainty continued as to what was to come from these trailers. To most, they appeared as another failed donation, though appreciated, which could not be used (Smolen, 2006). The electricity lines were nonexistent and those that were there were visibly not connected to the grid.



Figure 23. Rosie O'Donnell Facility Development

Sewage and water connections stuck out from the ground but were not extended into the trailers themselves until November 2006, a year after their initial donation. The new colorful addition to the bleak white surroundings was a respite from the sameness of row upon row of white trailers and a welcome sight (Figure 23, part two). The service providers finally had a place to conduct their activities in a more suitable place. The new playground provided the children a new, safe place to play while the classroom trailers organized everyone according to their individual needs. Structure and a sense of order began to emerge.

DEP's progression took on a pictorially reverse progression in many ways. Before the Rosie O'Donnell facilities opened, DEP conducted all educational activities in the only shaded area on site, the little white tent, with blue tarp flap doors to enclose the tent from any summer rain (Smolen, 2006) (Figure 24, part one). During this time, providing activities and games that reminded the RV children of home were some of the guiding elements that led DEP, such as hopscotch, and basketball, etc. (Figure 24, part one). Using the newly paved street capillaries, DEP staff was also able to engage children in writing and drawing chalk activities while conducting interest inventories, which often included depicting their favorite movies and characters (Figure 24, part two) and building activities around them.



Figure 24. Interest Inventory

However, after moving into Rosie O'Donnell, a majority of such personalized activities ceased to be the primary objective and focus of DEP, due to the complete change in role and capacity in which DEP was to serve. The primary objective of all educational activities was to focus on academic development of RV children through activities focused on standardized testing (Smolen, 2007). In the eyes of DEP staff; with rocky relationships with the major West Coast institution, LC, and LFRC, the responsive nature of our program was fissured (Figure 25, part two). It was not until the organization of Teen Fun Night and Adult Group that DEP regained its initial sense of responsiveness.



Figure 26. DEP Before and After

Though the little white tent remained a place for people to come and gather, it was not to the degree of the big white tent (donated through Sister Judith's efforts), or the Family Center at the

Rosie O'Donnell facilities (Smolen, 2007). Children migrated to where the services were provided, and with the colorful Rosie O'Donnell "campus," it was not hard to imagine why children veered toward the back of RV.

Responsiveness Concerning RV Adults

As mentioned previously, the more important elements for RV adults were the fulfillment of basic needs, such as security and safety of their loved ones and the social need of having the ability to congregate with others (Smolen, 2008). When DEP first began its operation, RV parents served as some of the main informants on the needs of families. Though DEP could not address all needs, some were addressed, such as providing children with a safe space to engage in educational activities that allowed children to escape from thinking about their current circumstances and helping them look toward their futures. After Rosie O'Donnell facilities opened, parental input sadly was no longer considered.

Also, before the Rosie O'Donnell facilities were put in place, the big white tent was the main site for getting together, however with the opening of the Family Center, most used that as their new site. The services that moved into the Family Center provided the adults with new FEMA and government information, recreational activities, but few mental health and support groups.



Figure 26. Responsiveness Concerning RV Adults

DEP filled that gap once a relationship was built with the LSU School of Social Work. Because adults expressed that they wanted to meet in more informal settings, DEP was able to adapt to such demands simply by not being associated with too many additional partners (Figure 26, part one). The informal meetings on the stoop of the trailers made many of the residents more at ease and allowed for more participants to approach our group and consequently, obtain more participants (Smolen, 2008). During the last months of RV, several such meetings were organized. However, with rains and occasional colder weather, the Family Center still provided the shelter and comfortable place for meetings to take place (Figure 26, part two). In tandem, the adults from the Adult Group and the teens from Teen Fun Night would often attend each other's groups, having multigenerational gatherings became a common sight and typical of New Orleans familial visits. The teen in the Figure 26 (part three) was one of the teenagers who came to all Teen Fun Nights and some of the adult groups. However, not all efforts were successful in helping either group to adjust.

Lack of Cultural Responsiveness

The majority of the un-responsive acts were done on the part of FEMA. However, by having to adjust to the needs of their residents, FEMA not only installed the mailboxes on RV premises but also small laundry huts (Figure 27, part one) (Smolen, 2007). These were built in response to residents hanging laundry lines outside their trailers. As FEMA did not want the entire site interwoven with laundry ropes, washing machines and dryers were put in place, but only three huts on the premises with three washers and three dryers in each one (Smolen, 2007). This was one of the few good outcomes that resulted from FEMA; however, the issue of propane tanks overshadowed the laundry hut installation.



Figure 27. Remissible Elements

In the summer of 2007, FEMA revoked free propane tanks. Residents had to pay for their own tank and delivery (Figure 27, part two). This additional and unexpected financial hardship caused a significant uproar because many of the residents were saving the money for the future move or gas for their car to get to work. Now, with an additional expense to consider more worries ensued. This was also the time when rumors spread about FEMA implementing mandatory rent payments at the beginning of 2008 to encourage people to leave as well (Smolen, 2007, 2008). In some cases this worked.

From the educational facilities side, the lack of responsiveness could be depicted from the LFRC staff's approach to the residents and their children. With the amount of new teaching materials, and so many hands to help in developing innovative programming, the foci remained on improving test scores. Though it is important in public school setting, and especially in trying to prove to the rest of the nation that New Orleans children can succeed in school, the program was less than responsive when it came to individual and cultural needs that were expressed in the first months of DEP and while parental involvement existed. In the end, only once was the Promethean board used in the course of the almost two years of the facilities being opened and while DEP and EDUC 2000 students were present. None of the additional technology was touched. The Apple laptops donated from 2006 were only used by Sinsonte to develop digital

stories, but that were not shared by Major West Coast institution as part of data under the same IRB (Smolen, 2007). Eventually, these stories were used in the analysis and publication of literacy levels as featured in Teachers College Record articles and website (Avila, 2008). In retrospect, multifarious situations arose that demanded reevaluation of ethical boundaries but in most cases they were only one sided (Smolen, 2008). Such acts were representative of the general perception of evacuees, other service providers, and general treatment of the affected population.

Perceptions of Katrina

Throughout the entire time at RV, the most commonly shared attitude about Katrina and its recovery efforts was that it was ongoing and that it was going to take a long time for evacuees to be able to recover (Smolen, 2008). With a constant fluid flux of population entering and leaving RV, whether they were the evacuees themselves or service providers, the idea of stability was hard to fathom. The constantly appearing FEMA fliers and notices on trailer doors threatening with early closure dates (Figure 28) equated to RV residents who lived in a constant state of uncertainty and of potential displacement. Resembling eviction notices, the fliers were a reminder to speed up efforts to find an alternative home. The general public was regularly informed as to the types of government recovery efforts and programs as presented in a slew of newspaper articles, but failed to grasp the human element of evacuees' struggles to regain footing in their lives (Lovett, 2006; Saltman, 2007; Smolen, 2008).

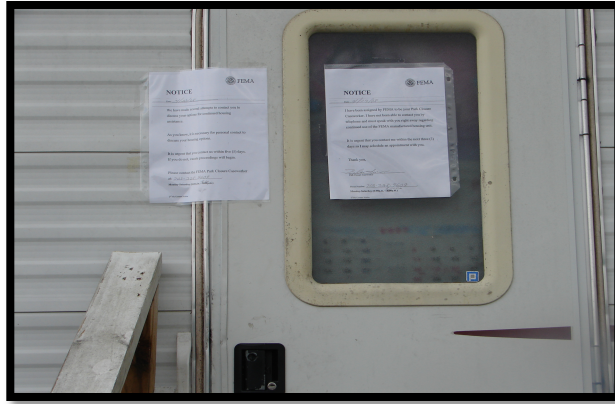


Figure 28. Eviction and FEMA Closure Date Notices

After a year post-Katrina, the nation was still surprised to see how individuals were still not able to move back to New Orleans or out of the trailer parks. The truth was a majority of RV residents were slowly building new social networks that would serve to help them in various aspects of their lives. The problem remained throughout the entire time that service changed or their staff would change, making evacuees skeptical as to the dedication of the service providers to their cause (Smolen, 2007). Consequently many evacuees would stop seeking help from those agencies. However, in the public eye this was presented as not wanting to seek help and taking advantage of the system, or being plain lazy and not wanting to take the time to learn more about options available to them (Smolen, 2007). In many ways the defined borders of the chain link fence helped in protecting many from such accusations.

In the end, the last days of RV's existence were indicative of what the recovery looked like three years after Katrina took place. Having moved all the residents either into new houses or apartments, government sponsored housing, but mostly into hotels, the site left traces and shadows of the people who lived there (Figure 29). The collage of abandoned debris, left behind, yet another move, and told stories that were only known to those who lived there or worked there for a longer time. These piles represented to some, what truly mattered.



Figure 29. Leftover Debris

The formaldehyde-ridden trailer overgrown with molding green sides began to slowly merge into its own surrounding (Figure 29, part one), as those types of trailers were usually completely disposed of once the occupant left the premises (Spradlin, 2010). The typical American red wagon left behind trace that children used to play there near the basketball court with bleachers, but was now abandoned having fulfilled its mission to entertain (Figure 29, part two). The sewage and electricity connections sprouting from the ground in organized rows in groups of three (water, sewage, electricity), were now sealed and ready for future disasters and perhaps, disaster responses (June In, 2008). The mayor of Baker talked about developing Katrina cottages on RV grounds, to limit the amount of unreliable trailers and have permanently ready facilities for any disaster affected population (Hannon, 2008). The cottages never came to fruition. The trailers were either sold or disposed of, while Rosie O'Donnell's playground was donated to the local East Baton Rouge Public School System (Smolen, 2008).

A year after the closure (2009), I returned to RV to see what had happened to the site since all the residents moved out. I found the grounds still surrounded by the fence and the gate locked with a padlock and chain. Beyond the gates the only prominent features that remained were the paved roads and one trailer that was located immediately behind the gate, where FEMA security had their office. It was left behind. The grounds themselves were increasingly

overgrown by vegetation (Figure 29, part four). Slowly nature was taking back what was hers. The utility connections were still visible above the wild grass but just barely. The sun was beating down at the grounds with immense power, having no shade anywhere around. The remnants of white gravel that was not swallowed by grass and weeds shone brightly, like small treasures in the grass. With all the trailers gone, the site where Rosie O'Donnell's facilities used to stand was also visible from afar. The ground had returned to its arid state. It was the only spot with orange colored ground, providing contrast to the now dominant green. Just like the nation's memory of Katrina had faded, so did the signs of Renaissance Village's existence. The stories of what took place there were now becoming a myth of something that happened a long time ago in a faraway place. And no one still believes that such events could have taken place in the US to US citizens, it was simply too "surreal" to believe.

Surrealism Uncovered

The disaster gained a series of names, descriptors, monikers, and reputations. While all agree Katrina managed to expose various inadequacies of different strata of US society and government, it also reached into individuals' imagination to attempt to grasp the extent of the devastation, disturbance, and disruption of peoples' lives. For that reason, the descriptor most often used and recorded during this study about response to the disaster was the word "surreal."

The surrealist "object" in this study has been DEP and its stages of metamorphosis as presented by: myself – through personal journals; LSU DEP coordinators – through the interview and pictures; and LSU students participating in the EDUC 2000 course; and viewing the perceptions of Katrina overall on an international scale. The trilogy of collages and its analysis allowed exploring the subconscious of the project itself. However, before venturing any further it is worthy to remind the reader of the definition of "surrealism" as defined by Andre Breton in

1924 in his First Surrealism Manifesto and to also remind the reader to apply this definition to one disaster response, RV in Baker, Louisiana:

Surrealism, n., masculine. Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.

Encyclopedia. Philos. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected, in the omnipotence of the dream, and in the disinterested play of thought. It leads to the permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to its substitution for them in the solution of the principal problems of life (1924/1972, p. 26).

As mentioned in previous chapters, surrealism relies heavily on metaphors, dreams, and art to provide an entry and gain a better look into one's subconscious mind. "Within Surrealism the art object is but a window, a springboard, a gateway, a rope of knotted sheets leading to this beyond, for which the world of dreams, or life beyond the looking glass, were convenient literary metaphors," (Mundy, 1987, p. 496). One of the most prevalent techniques used by the surrealists is automatic writing and free association (Tythacott, 2003). With that in mind, when posing a question to both DEP coordinators and LSU students to determine what their perceptions are on the meaning of "surreal" and how it applied in their opinion to Katrina this followed a form of free association; thus I was able to use a surrealist approach to gain an idea of their form of thinking, contributing to the general myth, or story, of Katrina. Though the interview did not force the participants to investigate as deeply as surrealists would do during their sessions by falling into trance and use automatic writing and other forms of art, I managed to gain perspective from their answers.

Surreal for Coordinators

Both coordinators, Thomas and Jetson, were considered one of the first responders in DEP's program. When new needs arose from RV residents or from their neighborhoods, they

were also eager to assist and used any means possible to address a need, making them both more aware of the realities beyond the LSU campus but also beyond the RV trailer park. Though, both of them were not in the New Orleans at the time of the hurricane, the two coordinators provided unique knowledge with their backgrounds. Jetson's family did evacuate from New Orleans area and their house was flooded. Though her family pictures and items were not affected due to being on the second floor of their house, the house had to be demolished due to the extent of mold and rotting walls. Thomas's family, on the other hand, was located in the suburbs of Baton Rouge. Though she did not experience loss as Jetson did, many New Orleans folks moved into her neighborhood area where she and her neighbors tried to help as much as and possible. Therefore, both coordinators were able to provide interesting perspectives from both loss and helpful sides and on how the word "surreal" would apply to both of their situations.

Well, to me it's almost like a nightmare and it's almost like it couldn't have happened but it did happen and the memories, I sometimes have to wonder if they were true or not sometimes. Like did that really happen? But it did, and I guess my experiences were kind of concrete, you know there were a lot of people who would watch it all on the news and saw things but I went back and drove through it and it happened to me. And people who had it happen to them can relate to other people who had it happen to them, like you would say 'how many feet do you have' and we know what we're talking about. Other people, when I talk to them, they have this whole weird idea of what happened and it's hard to explain to them that no- I wasn't on my roof, no- I wasn't airlifted by a helicopter and so, I don't think the people who were not there, I don't think they get it. And it's probably better that they don't get it. Because if you can't get it, it's a good thing cause it didn't happen to you! You don't want it to happen to you! It was awful (Jetson, 2011).

In the surreal art movement the metaphors and dream states went hand-in-hand in the attempt to bring the subconscious into reality. Having gone through the experience and being able to only relate to individuals who have gone through similar experiences, conveys a sense of solitude, even loneliness. In the duration of the interview, Jetson admits that she cannot discuss Katrina in public for it being too emotionally distressing, hence contributing to the metaphor of

“nightmare.” Surrealism attempts to focus on people’s choices and why they make them, without the consideration for their emotional side, however, in this case the metaphors are driven by emotion subdued by time. Jetson further explains that it is only now that she is able to vocalize her emotions. Immediately after Katrina, she kept herself engaged in various activities, including DEP to escape the reality of her condition. When asked why she did not want other people, who have not gone through the experience, to understand what had happened, she goes on to say that in order to gain full understanding, they would have to go through the experience themselves; otherwise they will never be able to comprehend. She does not want people to suffer as she and other New Orleans people did. The nightmare metaphor seems to convey loneliness that can only be understood and shared by a small percentage of the population. Similarly to surrealism, individual subconscious can only be fully understood by the individual themselves (Bohn, 2002) and contributes to individual’s myth-creating (Breton, 1924); yet, when looking at a similar object, such as the event of Katrina and its aftermath, it is worth looking at others’ interpretations, thus contributing to the collective myth (Levi-Strauss, 1985).

Thomas admitted to having a bit of difficulty in recognizing the word “surreal” as an adequate descriptor for Katrina. Instead, she suggested another word that was more adequate according to her.

[T]he word surreal to me is a smooth word, it’s not a...it doesn’t give [fully] the impression of everything being so crazy; after Katrina it was just crazy, it was haphazard. The aftermath of Katrina was a haphazard situation where no one knew what they were doing and no one wanted to admit it (Thomas, 2011).

Though surrealism does not claim to have an overall goal as far as what the subconscious will attempt to bring to the surface, the political and social aspects do dominate the conversations though not in an orderly fashion and usually mixed with elements of nature. The idea of chaos exists as one of the first stages of a novice surrealist who does not know what to expect or how to

interpret the ideas that were presented to them (Tythacott, 2003). Therefore, Thomas's description of "haphazard" still falls into the category of surrealism, though it was not consciously done. The idea of no one knowing what they were doing and not wanting to admit to that fact, is a portrayal of the type of criticism that surrealists were also struggling to convey to the general population. Although at the time of surrealism (1924-1940) in Europe, vocalizing political critiques was not commonplace, in the case of Katrina and the availability of information through technology, the sense of chaotic response by all parties was registered numerous times. That kind of abnormal situation exposed the weaknesses of individuals and governments at all levels. Therefore, the word "haphazard" fits within the parameters of surrealism.

Surreal for LSU Students

For all of the LSU student interviewees, surreal meant out of the ordinary. Considering that all of the participants came from Louisiana and hurricanes are a factor in their lives, the events that transpired during and after Katrina, surprised them as well.

Well, it wasn't an ordinary situation, I'm from New Orleans and we experience hurricanes all the time and so the basic structure of it is 'oh the hurricane is coming, you come out and hide or go out for a day or two and then everything's back to normal' or even in the extreme situation you evacuate the city for a day or two and you come back. But in this instance it was different, I went back on the second day after the storm and everything was fine, and then when they said that the levees have been breached-then there was a completely different situation-like, we had to immediately leave and had to prepare for two days to stay somewhere else and then it came to 8 or 6 months even permanently in some cases, that's just out of the ordinary (Boudreau, 2011).

Being that New Orleans was completely closed to the general population that evacuated in time after the levees broke, was an event that no one had ever experienced. The government's insistence on no one coming or leaving the city was an attempt to control the flow of population. Consequently, this prevented those New Orleanians from leaving the city and being turned away

on the bridges and overpasses from moving forward. This baffled those from within and outside (Drum, 2005).

Like out of the ordinary, out of your normal, natural self, like the disaster even though it was natural it was kind of unnatural because nobody has ever been in that kind of situation and that's how I think about that. For real, (Taylor, 2011).

Comprehending the extent of events was a struggle for many individuals, even those who were not directly affected. Similarly, surrealists were faced with traumatic events of World War I and II, and trying to comprehend how to subsist in these circumstances. Though I am not claiming that Katrina and the World Wars are to be compared, I am claiming the events as sufficiently perturbing to the general populace and just cause for all to question their surroundings and implications.

To me surreal means it does not feel like reality. When something traumatic or life changing actually happens many times we don't expect it. We hear of things happening to other people all the time, yet we never expect it to be us. When this happens surreal seems more like a bad dream than a reality (Wayne, 2011).

Equally to Jetson's metaphor of nightmare, Wayne compares Katrina and surreal to a "bad dream," but only when such terrible events happen to her, her family, her city, and even her country. Being aware that disaster happens somewhere around the globe at any given point in time, and sympathizing for the individuals, yet having to go through a disaster and seeing it happen in your own back yard, was an eye-opening experience. For surrealists, it never had been a struggle to make their audience or kin understand what tragedy or trauma was, since the World Wars reached all levels. However, their struggle for understanding stemmed from their form of resistance and answer to that disaster (Carrouges, 1974).

Unlike Nietzsche's nihilist philosophy, Breton believed in redemption and being able to find a resolution to opposites such as life and death, self and other, and even war and peace. However, all of this had to take place by disturbing the reality (Tythacott, 2003; Bohn, 2002;

Caws, 1997; Rosemont, 1978; Carrouges, 1974). Fadden's definition and understanding seems to portray the very crux of this struggle and attempt.

[I]n the sense of 'is this really happening', and it's like transition can be really hard for an individual and it can be either negative or positive and it all depends how the person wants to think of the definition of surreal, I look at it in a positive way like 'is this really happening and is this positive for me, I can't believe I'm actually going through this but maybe I'm the only person who can think about this in a positive way and this can be better for me...I don't know, it makes me think of is this really happening—yesterday I was in New Orleans and today I'm in another city and this is my home now, and I would be like is this really happening coming from just an ordinary life to different life, just switching so fast (Fadden, 2011).

Coming into grips with one's situation and attempting to do the best one can with circumstances at hand, is an important aspect of surrealism. This particular element separated surrealism from Dada and Cubism movements, which usually followed a self-destructive and fatalist conception of life. The prevailing sense of hope, however, had to be followed by action on the part of a true surrealist. Though recognizing positive sides to disaster or any situation were important, it was not until the person attempted to develop a deeper understanding of circumstances, especially how the subconscious was processing the new environmental factors and how to portray them into the outside world, that surrealism can be applied. The struggle for the social, historical, and personal sub-consciousness was in the development for their representations to the outside world. In that effort, the EDUC 2000 course demanded students to write diablogs, which allowed for deeper reflection to be made about the RV site and personal sentiments to be represented. Though diablogs were not developed for surrealist purposes they did represent a medium for deeper reflection. Similarly, the story circle method of conducting classroom discussions resembled surrealist poetry-making methodology, where one speaks for a given amount of time and may speak freely about a topic at hand, with no reservation on anyone stopping his or her

train of thought. Once again, this methodology was not used to fit the surrealist purposes; however, it followed the basic principles of surrealist style for reaching the subconscious.

Surrealist Elements in International Media

One of the main reasons why I wanted to look at surrealism was due to its prevalence in people's reactions to Katrina that has emerged not only in casual conversations but also in media. Though my primary inspiration was from anecdotes from RV residents, it was also apparent that local media (Baton Rouge and New Orleans newspapers) used the descriptor of "surreal" as a main comparison to the events following Katrina. Interestingly, the international media also used elements of Surrealism in their own descriptions. The most used medium from the surreal arsenal was metaphors: "The nightmare in Louisiana comes from the darkest of science-fiction comic books," (Gilles, 2005, p. 41). As mentioned before, the difficulty to make sense of the reality at hand made most individuals reach for tools from various fields in order to find an explanation for the circumstances that surrounded them. Metaphors such "nightmare" and "science-fiction comic books" clearly relate to the very definition of surrealism where reality mixes with dream as well as other forms of media used to reveal dream states to explain reality (Breton, 1972). "A reality, however, paralyzed America, which refused to accept for many days in a row," (Gilles, 2005, p. 41). Surrealists constantly struggled to look beyond their current reality to seek the epicenter of subconscious (Tythacott, 2003). In the case of French media, it reported the extent of shock by the American people, but also that of the French. Therefore, guided by the general emotional state of shock, Gilles used surrealist methodology to convey his point most poignantly.

Another source that used metaphors to represent most vivid images from New Orleans to also render a sense of shock was the Canadian media.

Those who died in the hurricane, those who were injured, those clinging to rooftops, those who were herded into the Superdome like cattle, whose

pathetic stories we see nightly on the news, are those who live on the margins of society - the poor, the frail elderly, the institutionalized, the mentally ill, the homeless, the illiterate. They were left behind because they had no cars or money to flee, and nowhere to go. That they were left to wallow in the putrid floodwaters is highly symbolic. But, sadly, it is not that surprising: Those scraping out a living in the lower classes of American society were long ago abandoned (Picard, 2005, A19).

The comparison of Katrina victims to being “herded...like cattle” reveals the type of treatment they received from US government sponsored services, in the eyes of the Canadian people.

Ironically, a comparison could be made from this metaphor to the transition made from Superdome to RV, which was a field surrounded by cattle. Furthermore, Picard goes into comparing the marginalized individuals from the lowest social class, who were most affected, to being the ones who on regular basis scrape for food and are usually left behind. Consequently making the “putrid floodwaters” a metaphor for their condition; symbolism that he himself recognizes. The imagery within that symbolism and metaphor corresponds to the forms used in portraiture as well. Though the media are not known to use art movements as ways to report current events, it is interesting that within their literary toolbox, surrealist elements exist. In cases of disasters where it is difficult to convey dire human conditions, components such as metaphors, analogies, comparisons, symbolisms, and others, all find themselves in a liminal interdisciplinary area accessible to all giving the flexibility but also easy of expression for what lies beneath.

Conclusions

In the surrealism art movement, the mixture of art, metaphors, and politics always went hand in hand (Tythacott, 2003). Considering that Katrina exposed horrendous levels of poverty, discrimination of particular minority groups, failing education systems, and most of all government’s ineffective and slow responses, it is no wonder that the definitions of “surreal” by the study participants have all included political undertones at one point or another. By

constructing a collage using the definitions of participants, in order to gain a view of “real,” as per the definition of collage methodology (Mundy, 1987), one gets a grim image of uncertainty and turbulence, a sense of beyond normal. As Breton attempted to convey, that no situation exists without several political and social undercurrents aiming to benefit only few while others were meant to suffer and subsist without possessing the conscience of their own position, and keeping the higher echelons unaware of the struggling lower classes (1972). Surrealism was meant to break the cycle of ignorance and expose the general public to the cynical reality of government and society, culture, and individuals themselves.

In many ways Katrina served as a catalyst, similarly to surrealism, to expose the realities of New Orleans and raise social unconscious to the forefront of newspapers, books, and many educational efforts. Gaining perspectives from both DEP coordinators and EDUC 2000 students allows viewing how widespread the very definition of surrealism reaches. Surprisingly all study participants used metaphors as their main form of association with “surreal,” and predominantly to express “out of the ordinary situations.” In the years following the end of surrealism, as an art movement, majority of reactions described the movement as, in fact, “out of the ordinary,” (Mundy, 1987), consequently gaining such a reputation which followed into the mainstream. Therefore, it is not surprising that the study participants used such descriptor as their own definition; however, most of the responses provided, did touch upon other elements that were prevalent in the surrealist philosophy itself. Though not consciously done, the entire surrealist idea of turbulence, struggles for improvement, and hope were covered by all study participants.

Chapter 7: International Perspectives

At the time of Katrina and Rita, all individuals in Louisiana were impacted greatly by the devastation caused by the storms. However, people across the world were affected to a certain extent as well. Across the globe, many individuals experienced a sense of shock that such a disaster and its aftermath could take place in the richest country in the world. The US population has never experienced such a catastrophic event where a whole US city was almost completely devastated. The events that transpired on 9/11 shook the American nation as being vulnerable to outside influences by terrorist groups; however, with Katrina, it was a natural disaster that prompted unnatural disaster effects of levees breaking and flooding New Orleans. The individuals who had undergone the evacuation and displacement felt the effects for several years afterwards.

In terms of disasters affecting the US, Hurricane Katrina broke new ground in a variety of ways. The storm itself was huge and in its aftermath, its actual path of destruction measured nearly 90,000 square miles, an area approximately the size of the United Kingdom and roughly for times the size of Hurricane Betsy's flood plain back in 1956 (. Although exact numbers are still elusive, in Louisiana, at least 1,100 lives were lost (Horn, 2006; Sulentic Dowell, 2008). According to a report by the Children's Defense Fund (2006), Katrina decimated entire school systems, both public and private, and thousands of children lost months or, in some cases, an entire academic year of instruction. In the greater New Orleans area, roughly four-fifths of the city of New Orleans flooded, and many areas stayed that way for approximately three weeks (Sulentic Dowell, 2008).

The participants in this study include those immediately affected and those who participated in the disaster response and DEP in particular. Keeping it in perspective that Katrina

caused the most extensive damage ever in the history of US but not globally, I was interested in determining whether the DEP participants' perception of international disasters changed since their experience with the hurricanes. Having gone through the disaster, seeing the devastation, and being in such proximity to those who lost everything, was bound to have an effect on any individual. I wanted to see the type of effect it might have had on an international scale.

Funneling Local Perceptions on International Events

International Perception of Coordinators

Considering that the DEP coordinators, Jetson and Thomas, experienced the hurricane's effects differently: Jetson losing her home, and Thomas assisting in her community, yet both being most actively involved in DEP's operations, gaining insight into their perceptions on international disasters is most invaluable. All of the discussion in this section concentrated on looking at the victims themselves, rather than any political implications stemming from the events. However, the social factor is featured since it is tied to any disaster especially when considering how individuals react or respond to the aftermath.

Personally yes, I see the individuals as 'oh my goodness, what they have to go through from this point forward', and on the international level I know that what's happening in United States since we're the power country, I just can't imagine living in the countries with tsunamis and what's going on over there. The poor people were already devastated from the beginning and then for this to happen, it's very sad (Thomas, 2011).

Thomas further admits that her awareness of post-disaster response has been made more acute as far as types of programs that are available rather than those that are sometimes dispatched. Further, she sympathized with the responders as far as attempting to provide quality services while working in difficult circumstances. Jetson's response differed from that of Thomas in relation to the concept of connectivity with the victims.

You know, you would think I would [connect with victims] but no, I don't think so. I mean, I know it sucks [going through a disaster] and...even

small things like floods in Tennessee it's so far from where we are that I can't even imagine what those people are going through. A friend of mine's sister lived in New York and her basement got flooded in a blizzard or something, one of those huge snow storms that went through there, and they've been living in a one room apartment garage with 3 kids because they don't have insurance on their house or something...and all I can say is 'oh I understand' but I don't understand and honestly I was kind of a kid in that whole situation [during and after Katrina]. My parents lost everything, I just lost the place I called home and my home videos, which that irked me a lot but I was really a kid and so...I think my parents can relate more to other people than I ever could (Jetson, 2011).

Understanding Jetson's own limitations and maturity level at the time of disaster surfaced only by being able to distance herself, both from the proximity of the site but also due to the extent of time. Her own reflections on the events following Katrina did not gain meaning until years later. This type of introspection was a new development that was partially due to having to work with children even now, whose families have gone through Katrina and remained in Baton Rouge.

It was weird that the kids that I have now they were born in 2001 and so they were only 4 when Katrina happened so it's kind of weird to hear it their memories because I don't think they're their memories, I think it's more people have told them what had happened, kind of like I remember my first birthday party but that's only because I've watched it on video so many times that I remember it, that kind of thing, like a [secondary memory] (Jetson, 2011).

Though the children in Jetson's response are not the ones who lived at RV, it is interesting to see that there are still many who have stayed behind and their memories remain fresh to this day. However, on an international scale the individuals who mattered most for Jetson are those fulfilling the roles of disaster responders, such as the role she was fulfilling while working with DEP.

That's awful [disasters] and I know that the people who go and who are there, and are consistently there that make the difference. While the people who donate money, while that's great and all, the difference comes from the people at the front lines because you can really affect people and the people who show up with a smile everyday whether it's the people from the Red Cross or whomever you are it gives people hope and that's fabulous. Yeah, if I'm the one donating money, I would give it to the people who I

know are going to be there, and not the ones who are going to drop and go and say they did their part (Jetson, 2011).

In other words, Jetson's awareness rose as far as the type of responders, types of activities that they conduct, and especially how long their intended programming is going to take. Having seen the inefficiency of so many programs that entered RV and the nature of other programs with an agenda to take advantage of RV residents and their stories, it touched Jetson to focus more on those who enter a disaster site with the sole intent to assist (Jetson, 2011). Jetson admitted later that she also followed up on the activities of organizations that she sponsors, to monitor the progress of assistance. However, she was aware that in many cases reports are skewed, however gaining information from various sources and media helps to triangulate to a certain measure the extent of progress.

All in all, the experiences from Katrina did change Jetson's and Thomas's perceptions on international disasters. Though the sentiment of empathy is shared by both Jetson and Thomas, it is directed at two different sets of individuals: for Jetson – the service providers entering a site after a disaster; for Thomas – the victims themselves who were most affected, especially the poor. Both admitted to following the media reports more attentively on the events that take place, however the foci continue to differ on individuals more important to them. Many of the components depicted by coordinators above are also shared among the LSU students.

International Perception of LSU Students

For all of the participating students the sense of empathy seems to be most pervasive amongst their answers. The emotional growth that all students admit to have had after Katrina helped them to process the images seen on TV or Internet on an emotional scale.

Honestly before Katrina I was concerned for other people but only to a certain extent. Now after experiencing it myself, I am compassionate and heartbroken for other survivors because I know how it feels. Even though people lives have been spared, I personally know what all is entailed with a

disaster. When people's whole lives are shifted, the result is tremendous (Wayne, 2011).

Furthermore, having gone through the evacuation process, being internally displaced for Wayne and Boudreau for an extended period of time, presented also other forms of growth beyond the emotional level.

Oh yeah, just being in different parts of the nation [US], it exposed me to the different kinds of natural disasters like I was in California for a while and there was a landslide and I was like 'I've never even heard of that' 'cause I was in my own New Orleans bubble but I stepped out and then I went to Oklahoma and there were tornado warnings, California landslides, Florida more hurricanes and with that different people from different cultures, I mean I've met so many people from Asia when I was in California and I got involved in different types of Asian cultures and different stuff like that. I really started to pay attention to a lot more things happening around the world like with natural disasters and even cultures, I got so involved into studying culture, I even changed my major, I'm thinking of going into Social Work and dealing with minority groups, (Boudreau, 2011).

Admittedly, Boudreau realized that her world revolved around the events happening only within New Orleans; Katrina forced her and her family to leave the comfort of their surroundings and experience the realities and disasters that could take place in other areas of the US. Boudreau's perception on disasters grew from the experience of being internally displaced. Connecting her newly gained knowledge of cultures and disasters to the international events seems to have made a significant impact, considering that as a result she changed her major. The exposure to other cultures and people involved made her more passionate about helping those in need and in underprivileged situation. However, not all students had to be forced out of their comfort zone in order to gain international perspective.

My perception hasn't really changed. I have always empathize[d] for foreign countries because of my Vietnamese background, so I kind of always understood other countries struggles. My awareness of international disasters grew though, because of the change in media, and

how much I watch the news nowadays. Now, I think if I grew up not knowing my culture and not being only a generation apart from my people who survived through communism in Vietnam (I'm a first generation [V]ietnamese [A]merican, parents came from [V]ietnam), I would be more less empathetic towards people going through international disasters. With recent uprising, civilian protests, economy crashes and overthrowing of dictators, international disasters have become more prominent in the media these days; so I think a decent human being in that scenario would have to empathize more, (Taylor, 2011).

Trung believes that being second generation Vietnamese has helped in maintaining the connection with international events happening in that part of the world, Vietnam. He also attributed the great influence that his family has had on him in being aware of the impact disasters have on various levels of population. With that in mind and with compiled experiences from RV, he claims he is able to interpret international events a bit more holistically and with greater amount of empathy, such as the aftermath of the tsunami in Japan.

Yet these kinds of perceptions come with a reflection period of six years post-Katrina. All of the study participants had time for introspection on their part, and were able to examine and reflect on how their perceptions have evolved and how they affect their views now. In general, the experiences from Katrina helped in developing an emotional understanding for evacuees and those displaced by events, for service providers, and for their own emotional development. Consequently, these elements have also contributed in deciphering images and reports from disaster sites that take place across the world. Though in the case of Trung, his family holds a much closer connection to outside-New Orleans events due to strong kinship bonds in Vietnam, the other participants' awareness has risen as well, partially due to their forced evacuation from N.O. and having to experience other forms of disaster, displacement, and exposure to and cultures. Being exposed to how other places deal with disasters such as tornadoes, and landslides, and others, has made those participants aware of the prevalent dangers that every place holds and the ever present need for all to be more vigilant to pay attention

(Boudreau, 2011; Wayne, 2011). In those cases, a cultural comparison was made on how individuals deal with disaster, however cultural comparisons are beyond the scope of this study, though they do merit a further look in the future. Interestingly, all participants acknowledged that international events do make an impact on them due to have gone through Katrina. Further, their forms of interpreting the information provided by media has also become more acute based on how media reported during the time of Katrina and beyond. Conversely, the international media was also attempting to process events transpiring in New Orleans; therefore, their perspectives should also be taken into account.

Accession of International Perspectives

Various international media covered the events following Hurricane Katrina. In many ways, the chaotic sequence of events was captured by a plethora of press releases as everyone struggled to determine what truly happened and how it affected particular groups in the U.S. as well as countries abroad.

A week after Katrina's landfall, media finally agreed on some factual elements and reported reactions and responses from countries across the globe; however, the focus of articles differed depending on the country of origin. The enormity of the storm and the far spread devastation prompted an additional exploration of how this man-made disaster was presented internationally and what elements are most pertinent to a particular country is worth investigating. My own background also led me to examining how the world perceived Katrina and responses to the storm's destruction.

For the purposes of this oeuvre, I explored articles from those countries that belong to the Global of Eight (G8): Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US). I selected these particular countries as they share the reputation with the US

as being the strongest economies of the world and thus, presumably capable of handling crisis that takes place within their borders. A news article was analyzed from each country. Considering the first week of September, 2005 seemed full of various and often times conflicting news, I intended to analyze only articles published during the second week of September and those published before the arrival of Hurricane Rita on September 24, 2006. Further, I chose articles that referred to Katrina and how individual country's local population reacted to the hurricane and its effects, as opposed to reports on at-the-time factual reports on Louisiana. All sources were located and retrieved from the Lexis Nexis database, with the focus on using the most widely known newspapers from each country or region. All articles were analyzed and coded using qualitative analysis software, Atlas.ti. Coding continued until point of saturation had been reached and main themes emerged.

Three main themes emerged, all related to disaster aid. The three major themes are: uncovering US, disaster, and international aspects. However, in order to understand their significance, a brief depiction of pertinent topics from each country is presented. Such descriptions will render a deeper understanding for the themes that emerged from coding. The following topics surfaced most frequently in these particular countries during the second week of September and during the search. For that reason they have been selected for the purpose of this research.

Canada

Overall, the biggest concern for Canadian public was public health and the extent of poverty among the victims of Hurricane Katrina. "When we look at the aftermath of the hurricane, we must do so through the prism of a society in which the social safety net is severely frayed, and in places virtually non-existent," (Picard, 2005, p. A19). The Canadian

examination of Katrina impacts, led to an overall introspection of Canadian preparedness and assessment of public services, in particular health services, as well as necessity for better services for the poor in case of disasters.

France

The most pertinent articles for this study were written in French. Though my French language skills allowed me to understand the articles, in order to avoid bias in my translations, I sought the help of a native speaker who assisted in translating the original article from *Liberation* newspaper into English. Manal Salame is an officially licensed Translator. She obtained her degree in Foreign Languages, General Translation in Arabic, French and English at Ecole d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs of Beirut, Lebanon. She further received her Master's Degree in Editorial, Economic and Technical Translation - Arabic and English into French - at Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs of Paris, France. Salame is currently residing on the island of Saint Martin where she is working as a freelance translator and proofreader (Arabic, English into French / French into English), specializing in economic and political translation (since 2009).

In many ways French reactions and responses resembled Canadian reactions as far as the emphasis on the examination of public services in Louisiana and their failures. However, French media conveyed more emotional rejoinder to the treatment of American people who were left behind and outrage toward the US government. Further, in many cases, a comparison of French and American forms of disaster preparedness and frequent exaltation of French services emerged throughout media and in the chosen article as well.

Germany

A disparity was clearly evident between the German government and its people on the subject of aid for Katrina victims. While the government immediately offered and sent food rations for the victims; the public offered minimal amounts of aid and donations;

The reason, according to a poll taken by polis-Umfrage for the German news agency DPA, is that many feel America is wealthy enough to take care of itself. Fifty-four percent of survey respondents said they would neither donate money nor other support for the Americans, (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.).

However, outrage also dominated the rejection of disaster aid that was sent over by the government, in particular food supplies, the U.S. blaming the food to be tainted with mad-cow disease.

Italy

Italian media expressed the abundance of aid available for Katrina victims, which the U.S. was glad to accept. The collaboration between countries had been extensively covered with frequent interviews with the new U.S. ambassador to Italy. The Italian prime minister was constantly quoted on finally being able to thank U.S. for their help in the liberation of Italy from Nazis during WWII, and being able to reciprocate the help at the time of need. This history reference is consistently reappeared throughout various Italian newspapers.

Japan

Considering the frequency of naturally occurring disasters in Japan, the media there was quick to pin point the fault on both Mother Nature as well as shortcomings of human endeavors.

In the perennial struggle between humankind and nature, civilization's victories are temporary at best. Most of us believe that such disasters are not "our" problems. Readers of this newspaper live with the ever-present risk of a massive earthquake, but that reality does not penetrate daily life. Yet the risk of being visited by a calamity is real, as the citizens of the U.S. Gulf Coast discovered last week, (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005, n.p.).

The articles found in this country's media were the most analytical from both the engineering perspective as well as from the political side. Conclusively, Japanese media attributed the event of Katrina as another defining moment in the US politics and especially for president George Bush Jr.

Russia

Though Russia was one of the first countries to offer aid to US, its aid was also halted from entering. The more preoccupying topic however, was the amount of Russian citizens stranded and rescued from the rooftops in New Orleans. Family stories seemed to pervade the media as well as the depiction of how former USSR countries were willing to donate or contribute to rescue efforts despite their low economic status (Abdulleav, 2005).

United Kingdom

The topic emerging most frequently that week in British media was about the British missing persons still in New Orleans as well as one confirmed deceased. The amount of personal stories of New Orleans experiences seemed to flood the media as well. However, predominant sentiment of the local population seemed to be astonishment to the sort of government response and weighing the human cost.

United States

United States itself reacted in multifarious ways; depending whether it was a neighboring state that felt the secondary effects of the hurricane, such as waves of internally displaced populations (IDPs); or from a further distance where major fundraisers were organized but local habitants were not directly affected. Therefore, two articles from the east and west coasts were analyzed to provide a better understanding of how a broad representation of the American population reacted to a disaster within their own borders. Further, in order to limit the amount of

confusion, all articles referring to 9/11 events of 2001 have also been excluded from selection. Though many articles across the globe seem to equate the two disasters in their impact on, now former, president Bush's presidency and efficiency of government. However, to understand how the local population reacted to Hurricane Katrina, I decided to exclude all articles from that date as well. Also, in many cases, the government's inefficiency and blame-game dominated majority of the newspaper coverage; consequently, I reached out to several states within each region to obtain a better perspective on local reactions that did not involve solely finger-pointing at government agencies.

East Coast Lens

Though disappointment in government was one of the main topics, few states did shift focus to bigger issues, for example their own preparedness. Pennsylvania was one of the main states that attempted to prepare its citizens the most for their own potential disasters while drawing lessons from events following Katrina. Making locals aware of the most common misconceptions about disaster planning as well as possible mistakes made by those unprepared seemed to pervade the conversations. Though Lancaster County is more likely to experience a nuclear disaster, rather than wrath of a hurricane, awareness and preparedness were the most vital forces to consider (Cradle, 2005).

West Coast Lens

"Hurricane Katrina is a grim warning of California's vulnerability to disasters, especially earthquakes, tsunamis and floods," (Hurricane Katrina a Grim Warning, 2005). Katrina provided the local population with additional ammunition to seek additional funding for fixing its structures to prepare for future disasters. While portraying major steps of improvement over the past several decades in building codes, communication grids, as well as general infrastructure,

the authors depicted the necessity to do more. The examples provided by the newspaper prove the frequency of disasters striking the State and provided examples of most urgent areas needing financial support.

While examining all articles using Atlas.ti software, three main themes emerged, entitled: Uncovering United States, Disaster, and International Aspects. Though broad, they cover an extensive amount of sub-codes and quotations, all of which contribute to the construction of a bricolage of international understanding of Katrina. These themes provide a glimpse to the types of topics circulating in the media; by no means do they cover the entirety of coverage. These themes cover the most overarching elements in the articles.

Uncovering United States

The G8 conclave takes into account the mutual economic growth among its members but also investigated future factors that can impact their progress. Disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, proved to be decisive strokes:

The economic cost will be in the tens of billions of dollars and will be felt worldwide: New Orleans is the fifth-largest port in the world and a critical node linking the U.S. to the global economy. The port could be closed for weeks and the effects will ripple around the world,” (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005).

And though the extent of the devastation was only just becoming apparent in the second week of September, the fear of longer lasting effects was already predicted to linger for an indefinite period of time. The sense of uncertainty was felt across the globe.

As a major economy, the U.S. prides itself on leading the economic world forward. After Katrina, for the first time in U.S. history, help was being offered and sent into this country. United States “is more used to bring relief than to receive it, and this experience inspires a feeling of humility,” (ItaliaOggi, 2005, p. 3). For many, it was also an opportunity to depict the shortcomings of U.S. politics, both on the foreign and internal fronts; “The wisdom of

involvement in Iraq will be attacked to the extent that it may deny U.S. cities the means to deal with problems at home. The president's domestic political agenda must now be rewritten”

(Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005, p. 1). In all cases, the foreign spectators were shocked by the government's slow response to its own domestic disaster and lack of support for its own people.

The strong image of US was now being questioned on daily basis.

The levees broke, New Orleans flooded, and scenes of despair and degradation, chaos and confusion were shown to all over the world. There were bodies floating in rivers or abandoned on city streets. Makeshift refugee centers overflowed with people, yet there was no food, water or personnel to help them, (Katrina's Grim Reminder, September 7, 2005).

Media was overwhelmed with pictures from the flood, depicting mucky waters with abandoned people on rooftops or families waddling through the streets on makeshift floating devices. It is no wonder that comparisons of US to underdeveloped countries were consistently made. “To the point that in a federal state in the world's richest country, rescue missions took longer to organize than in countries affected by a tsunami,” (Gilles, 2005, p. 41). Further, as more networks shared information, it quickly became apparent that there were elements that US tried to hide from the rest of the world in order to preserve its powerful image. Katrina swept off the veil covering the eyes of the world, uncovering “dirty little secrets - the pockets of wretched poverty in the midst of riches,” (Picard, 2005, p. A19).

Before I came to the U.S., my image of America came mainly from media, therefore, I was under the impression that American people looked like those from Bay Watch, all blond and skinny in places such as California, or completely obese and couldn't control themselves when faced with McDonalds. I was ignorant to the true image of U.S. population. I was also vaguely aware of the African American population, slavery, and their struggle for civil rights. However, knowledge of any other minority groups was completely oblivious to me since it was not featured enough in movies, at least those that reached within the communist Poland walls or

Middle Eastern TV stations. Hollywood influenced my notion the U.S. with “streets are paved with gold.” Indeed, the abundance of Polish jokes was known to me thanks to my American friends from middle school. Yet, I knew very little of American day-to-day life and strife of white collar, blue collar workers, or even less about those on welfare. American poverty did not exist in my mind. It was not until I came to the US and began volunteering in urban schools that I realized that such an income disparity existed. Similarly, the international arena had heard little to nothing about American poverty, until now.

They [Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama] had, prior to Katrina, among the worst health statistics in the developed world: appalling rates of child mortality, teenage pregnancy, diabetes, smoking and obesity...Before Katrina, there were far too many people living in poverty, in inadequate housing, lacking access to decent health care and education; before Katrina, there were too many single mothers, too many drug addicts, too many people with mental illness abandoned to the streets, too many men locked away in prison for petty crimes, and too much hopelessness, (Picard, 2005, p. A19).

Whether the international audience chose to believe all negative aspects or not, the pictures bolstered what was being reported. The true victims of the disaster became apparent:

Those who died in the hurricane, those who were injured, those clinging to rooftops, those who were herded into the Superdome like cattle, whose pathetic stories we see nightly on the news, are those who live on the margins of society - the poor, the frail elderly, the institutionalized, the mentally ill, the homeless, the illiterate. They were left behind because they had no cars or money to flee, and nowhere to go. That they were left to wallow in the putrid floodwaters is highly symbolic. But, sadly, it is not that surprising: Those scraping out a living in the lower classes of American society were long ago abandoned, (Picard, 2005, p. A19).

Even in the rest of the U.S., many blamed New Orleanians for not heeding the warnings from various government agencies to evacuate, but the “public could not implement what it does not have means of control,” (Gilles, 2005, p. 41), which consequently led the international media to dig further into the causes leading to slow and inefficient post-Katrina responses. Soon after the hurricane though, the truth began to emerge as well as the true image of what happened: “The

natural disaster was compounded by human failure,” (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005). But more astonishing facts were being presented about preparedness for such events.

The bursting of the levees had been predicted in every major disaster study and even served as the basis of contingency planning by the federal government. Yet funding requests for flood control and the levees have been cut for several years, and federal officials conceded they were not prepared for flooding, (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005).

The debate between State and Federal agencies was not as extensive as evidenced in local medias. The understanding of the division of responsibilities between these parties was never explained to the international audience, however the foci of the conversation began to circulate around missing services rather than responsible bodies.

Municipal police officers were left to themselves, but not a fireman's helmet left behind to show the kind of solidarity of a nation to help victims. No hospital logistics exist with emergency physicians to determine the extent of the tragedy and prevent potential epidemics, to add to the distress. No technical support team exists behind which America could have hid the shipwrecked-sort of national mobilization, leaving New Orleans in a state of a ghost town. For a long time, there was nothing. Then there was the army. But nothing else. In the U.S state-run utilities, do not exist, (Gilles, 2005, p. 41).

In Europe, public services are offered as a standard for the general population and which are responsibilities of the country's government. However, the general international belief seems to indicate that many services in the US, such as the police, fire department, water utilities, are privatized or wroth with capitalist ideology (Gilles, 2005). For that reason, international response to Katrina came with plenty of hesitations and critique. Since the economic backbone of U.S. could not support its own people, why and how could those from across the seas be capable of helping those who have claimed for decades to be the most prevailing economic power of the world?

Without the advantages of public services, the State [Louisiana] failed to meet its missions and its national solidarity waived where it should have been most visible. As portrayed in Louisiana: in the face of response to the

emergency, the ideology was swept away, (Gilles, 2005, p. 42).

Despite the criticisms, many countries across the globe still felt great empathy and exhibited willingness to extend a helping hand. “This isn’t led by resentment of America...the distress of a mother in New Orleans who has lost her children is just as enormous as that of a mother in Banda Aceh,” (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.). In many editorials and opinion pages across the world media, people sympathized with the victims and those who themselves were affected by previous disasters offered words of encouragement. However, seeing the extent of disaster shocked all, forcing many to reevaluate their perspectives on disaster as well as their own disaster preparedness and response.

Disaster

“Hurricane Katrina has been a catastrophe of almost unimaginable proportions,” (Picard, 2005, p. A19). Though I have experienced war and destruction in Yemen and even in Poland, Katrina sparked a renewed sense of empathy. While working with the evacuees, I internalized their grief for an extensive period of time. The fragility of peace and stability was constantly put under question. Similarly, across the globe such sentiments were shared.

Sadly, we are accustomed to the regular occurrence of natural disasters. It seems as if every few months a storm, flood, tsunami or earthquake devastates a country, exacts a frightening toll, and reminds us that we remain susceptible to the forces of the physical world, (Japan Times, 2005).

Katrina spurred a multitude of reactions. In most cases, immediately following Katrina, many countries contacted the U.S. government wanting to help those in need, soliciting requests for the types of assistance, or even immediately sending forth supplies that are usually dispatched when similar disasters happen somewhere else in the world.

Russia was the first country to offer rescuers and humanitarian aid after the devastating hurricane ripped through Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama early last week, but the first offers that the United States accepted on Sunday were from Italy and several other European Union

countries...More than 50 countries are offering assistance. Among former Soviet republics, offers have come from Armenia, Azerbaijan and even Belarus, whose government the United States has called the last dictatorship in Europe. Georgia has donated \$ 50,000 to the Red Cross, (Abdulleav, 2005, n.p.).

However, the US government appeared to respond in a different manner to such requests depending on who offered or sent aid. This two-pronged reaction caused a lot of consternation from various countries that thought themselves economic as well as long political allies.

Last week, a German military cargo jet carrying 15 tons of food labored into the air bound for the United States. The goal, of course, was to feed needy victims of Hurricane Katrina. But the food supplies never made it. Refused permission to land, the plane was forced to turn around and head back to Cologne, still fully loaded. Food from other countries has likewise been banned, (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.).

Countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, and even North Korea expressed their regret for loss of life and livelihoods, and offered monetary help and food supplies and even crude oil (Abdulleav, 2005, n.p.). U.S. clearly refused- being at political impasse with all; however, in regards to other countries, the reasons were more complex. In some cases, deeper political reasons began to surface as to why aid was not accepted. The most prevailing reason was that the sudden influx of donations took the U.S. off guard, with no pre-organized system to receive them as well as predetermined means of distribution. However, other reasons emerged as well.

As it turns out, the US Department of Agriculture had rejected the rations – originally prepared for NATO troops – out of fear they may be tainted with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), the agent thought to cause mad cow disease. Despite intensive efforts on the part of Germany's foreign ministry, the US government refused to give the plane flyover rights. But officers at a US base in Pensacola -- where previous German aid planes had landed -- believe there was another reason. In reality, the critics said, the Bush government was trying to avoid embarrassing images of Europeans making food relief deliveries to the States. After all, the meals had already been certified by NATO as BSE-free. Additionally, the same types of meals have been used in common deployments in Afghanistan, and they've also been consumed by American troops, (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.).

Rejection of aid was not a usual encounter for many countries. And several countries understood this as the U.S. government officials acting proud and putting their ego in front, ahead of their people's needs (Gilles, 2005; Picard, 2005; Spiegel, 2005). Though, Germany was clearly not the only country from which aid was declined (Abdulleav, 2005), Germans took the gesture as a slight. Previous historical events were constantly depicted of when U.S. accepted help from others but not from the German people, simply due to them being German and its Nazi history (Abdulleav, 2005). However, those were just a few explanations and displeasures coming solely from government perspectives; others reacted in other ways such as reluctance for donation.

The reason, according to a poll taken by polis-Umfrage for the German news agency DPA, is that many feel America is wealthy enough to take care of itself. Fifty-four percent of survey respondents said they would neither donate money nor other support for the Americans. That opinion is also reflected in the amounts raised by German charitable organizations, (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.).

Compared to other disasters, Katrina rendered a lot fewer donations from individual persons from across the world in comparison to other disasters in poorer countries. It was countries' governments that stepped in on behalf of their own people. However, individual donations from other countries were sparse (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005). "The US isn't a developing country," (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.) and assumptions were made of its own self-sufficiency. Once again, the extent and extreme of U.S. poverty was exposed for the first time to all making this one of the most shocking discoveries to all. At the same time, and as a response, most of the G8 countries also began analysis of their own preparedness for their types of disaster and analyzing whether an event such as Katrina could take place within their borders, and worst of all expose any of their secrets (Spiegel, 2005; Gilles, 2005). Similarly, entities within US borders used this as an opportunity to admit vulnerability and emphasize the need for vigilance to step up in

preparedness.

Disaster Preparedness within Borders

Immediately following Hurricane Katrina, a majority of the U.S. states began to reassess their own preparedness supplies for potential disasters.

But now, after seeing how helpless so many in New Orleans were and how long it took emergency workers to reach them you realize with a start you really could be all alone to fend for yourself during a disaster. Welcome to reality, (Cradle, 2005, p. A1).

California is one of the few states that faces a variety of disasters on consistent basis, with earthquakes and tsunamis occurring most frequently, correspondingly to Japan. For that reason, the state has taken upon a series of preventative measures to ensure the safety of its inhabitants. For example, building codes are one the strictest in the country (Faulkner, n.d). Countless studies are constantly conducted to assess risks and/or signs in order to predict potential sites that could be affected by next catastrophic event.

Chances of a levee break in the next 50 years are about 67%, triggered by either an earthquake or exceptional Sierra Nevada runoff. Katrina gives California lawmakers ammunition to get federal funds for levees. About \$90 million has been authorized but not appropriated (Hurricane Katrina a Grim Warning, 2005).

States that are more prone to disaster receive specific funding for such eventualities; however, with Katrina, state officials were able to solicit even larger sums. Further, insurance companies are one of the few fortunate businesses, which profit the most from signals of a disaster; “More earthquake insurance will be sold to nervous homeowners, especially when the state reduces rates by 22% in the next few months,” (Hurricane Katrina a Grim Warning, 2005). Buying more comprehensive insurance packages had become one of the first steps for individual homeowners in preparation for the worst. In New Orleans home insurance though present, could only have been afforded by a few. Further, the city not only faced hurricanes but also the possibility of a

chemical disaster. With the great amount of chemical plants in the area and more specifically railways that carry dangerous cargo, it is only fit that the city prepares for such eventualities as well.

Similarly, northern states reassessed all possible contingencies and their forms of response.

The possible disasters include flooding from a hurricane or tropical storm, a radiation leak from the Three Mile Island or Peach Bottom nuclear power plants, a leak of poisonous gas from an industry or train or truck accident, a terrorists dirty bomb release of radiation or harmful biological agents and a massive power outage. And despite intense planning under way for the best way to mobilize local, state and federal emergency crews in such disasters, the primary strategy in most disasters is to get people to hunker down safely, or what is called shelter in place, (Cradle, 2005, p. A1).

In the northeast, public service media spots encouraged the supplementation of emergency kits in every home. Basic disaster supplies began to disappear from local store shelves within days of news publications. Seeing the extent of individuals having to fend for themselves after Katrina, it did not take very much to convince the general public that it is likely that whatever happens they may be on their own. Further, maps were drawn out of potential disaster zones if a nuclear disaster or a radiation leak could take place and directed to local government sponsored websites for more information (Cradle, 2005). This was done in the effort to raise the public's awareness of who should prepare the most for such eventualities. The public was also informed of future disaster response efforts scheduled to be made, such as safety assessments of various facilities and spaces, to ensure that local officials were aware of potential dangers zones. Statements about future allocation of funding for such efforts began to appear as well (Cradle, 2005). Other G8 countries also did such analysis within their own borders to appease public doubt.

Disaster Preparedness beyond Borders

Often times, many G8 countries do not discuss major disasters within their borders until

it is too late. However, Katrina has forced many to once again reevaluate their forms of preparedness.

Since Katrina hit, disaster preparedness and emergency response have become hot topics. But being ready for a disaster is about a lot more than having body bags, batteries, drinking water, food and emergency shelter at the ready; it's more complicated than having troops on standby, and a willingness to dole out cash to survivors. Good public health policy stresses prevention, not mopping up operations, (Picard, 2005, p. A19).

Admittedly, Canadian officials lack in certain areas and inter-departmental communication (Picard, 2005); however, major public services such as police, fire department, health services, and others have a preexisting system of communication and disaster protocols that allows for quick dispatch. In many ways, Canadian officials claimed that their disaster preparedness is up to par. However, Canada is not known to experience many natural and unnatural disasters other than severe snowstorms and damaging horizontal winds, and oil spills; the devastation to New Orleans proportionally probably could not happen in Canada where an entire city is affected, yet efficiency reassessment of public services was the main tenet of conversations in Canadian media.

In Europe, natural disasters are frequently compounded with human error. For that reason, several countries follow each other's forms of preparedness depending on the success-rate. However, in all cases, the focus has been similar to that of Canada – public services.

Faced with this situation, and after the severe fires that devastated Portugal this past summer, we realize the absolute necessity of strong public services. And it is understood why the fire department in France, which acknowledges better than anyone the types of risks inherent in any disaster, wants to preserve the opportunities to exercise their professionalism, for a public service worthy of its name. Same for emergency medical units dispatched from regular medicine facilities to save lives after disasters. They are not only based on the types of medical expertise, but also on complex logistical processes that must be instantly triggered, (Gilles, 2005, p. 42).

The general agreement for the importance and improvement of public services in France and

among its neighbors dominated the conversation Europe-wide. “Analyzing France for the past 50 years, changes were needed,” (Gilles, 2005, p. 42). In those countries such services are provided for free or at minimum cost to its citizens (Gilles, 2005). Medical services are free, but the taxes are higher to accommodate the costs. This model is prevalent across the European continent, however more improvements needed to be made. When disaster takes place, whether they are wild fires, floods, or volcano eruptions, public services are dispatched to deal with the disaster. Granted, Europe is much smaller than the United States, therefore forms and lengths of communication can be compared to intra-state communications, hence if additional assistance is needed from other bodies (military or social work), it is easier to organize. Therefore monitoring the efficiency of such services is also easier to that of U.S.; however, issues still stem within France or England’s forms of response. Depending on which government party currently resides, certain public services receive specific sponsorship, at times it may be the education sector, other times it may be the police department.

Even though the disaster was not comparable to Katrina, it is remembered in France the comfort provided by the agents of EDF on the ground soon after the great storm of 1999. Despite all economic considerations, their involvement in a mission placed public services at the heart of the republican pact (Gilles, 2005, p. 43).

Though the French media gave accolades to their general accessibility and readiness of services, it will depend on how they respond when a citywide disaster strikes within their borders. In the meantime, thanks to the European Union (EU) best practices are shared through a special division called European External Action Services, which allow for better coordination of disaster response across borders (EEAS, n.d.) as well as sharing information for service improvements. Through such a medium countries such as France and Germany (those part of G8), are able to provide and receive assistance when need strikes. In the case of Katrina, post-disaster information was quickly disseminated to all EU participants, hence several offers to US

government of basic supplies came through EEAS; however, as mentioned before, US reaction was an unexpected refusal of several donations. This brought on many international political aspects to surface in the analysis of such reactions.

International Aspects

As mentioned before, the U.S. had more experience providing help to other countries. In many ways, it is not surprising that many were taken off guard and did not know how to proceed. When several chains of command were swept away or have been displaced, attempting to respond in an adequate fashion became a herculean task with ample room for mistakes. Other countries that have gone through or have had experience with such disasters, deployed immediate assistance that they would have sent for any other country faced with similar conditions: “The Emergency Situations Ministry [from Moscow, Russia] said four IL-76D planes were on standby at the Ramenskoye airport, ready to fly to the United States with 60 rescue workers, two light search helicopters and their crews, and humanitarian aid,” (Abdulleav, 2005). In the end the planes were not deployed. With frequent rejections of aid, it is not surprising that international donations rates were minimal compared to other countries hit by disasters.

One week after it [German Red Cross] set up a special hurricane relief account, the German Red Cross said Friday it had only raised €790,000 for the Americans. By comparison, similar calls after the December tsunami and the 2002 flooding in eastern Germany drew more than €10 million (Spiegel, 2005, n.p.).

However, beyond the issue of small donations and accepted aid, reassessment of both U.S. foreign and internal policies were being made by international bodies. For most, the foreign policies were being questioned as far as efficiency and reasons for involvement. “The wisdom of involvement in Iraq will be attacked to the extent that it may deny U.S. cities the means to deal with problems at home. The president's domestic political agenda must now be rewritten,” (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005). Everyone monitored President Bush’s actions very closely.

Being in charge of the most powerful country in the world, his decisions carried a lot of weight as far as foreign policy across the globe, however it became apparent that issues at home on US soil were edging on refuting that image.

Mr. Bush must deal with the fallout from this incident [Katrina]. The decision to postpone this week's summit with Chinese President Hu Jintao is one sign of this new focus on domestic affairs. The death of Chief Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist will reinforce this tendency (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005).

Further, a deeper look into the ongoing War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan also came into focus. The amount of money spent on these wars was being compared to what could have been dedicated to disaster response. Moreover, many media sources also looked at what resources were available and what was deployed to assist those at the front lines of Katrina (Birmingham Post, 2005; Gilles, 2005; Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005). “The ranks of those forces [military] and their equipment were already diminished: More than one-third of Louisiana guard and reserve soldiers were in Iraq,” (Japan Times, 2005). It quickly became apparent that preparedness for natural disasters was not a priority in the U.S. administration at the time, instead “terrorism now dominates disaster planning,” (Katrina's Grim Reminder, 2005). It may not come to many as a surprise the particular focus of the administration; however, it must be noted that prior to Katrina, 9/11 events exposed US’ vulnerability to outside ideologies and needed to be addressed. The involvement in Iraq, and later on in Afghanistan, demanded many sacrifices to be made, especially those financially. Immediately following 9/11 and the declaration of war in Iraq, many international scholarships were taken away from students in order to help finance the war. However, loss of financial aid seems like a small side effect when considering the type of financing that was needed for repairing the New Orleans levees.

It is noteworthy that not all comparisons and assessments were done in a negative light. For countries such as Italy, whose donations were immediately accepted by the US, historical

aspects were put to light of how the U.S. had assisted Italy in their greatest time of strife and need.

We would have done even more if your request was broader,' said Berlusconi, and yet we are still available if there is part of the United States intends to seek other aid. Our friendship with your people and your country, 'he continued, turning to the premier Spogli,' is based on a long history '. Berlusconi has mentioned 'the contribution of the many Italians who have contributed to making the U.S. the largest democracy in the world' and reiterated 'thank Italy for what happened 60 years ago with the liberation from Nazi-Fascism' and the 'contribution made by the U.S. that have allowed us to resist the potential danger not only the USSR that hung over our country, (ItaliaOggi, 2005, p. 3).

The reference of US's involvement in the efforts to restore Europe after World War II were cited by the French press as well, however the Italian press mentioned these events more pronouncedly than any other European G8 country. The sense of reciprocity in the historical context was mentioned even among the Italian opinion's pages as well. Yet as weeks went by, the focal point shifted towards looking at recovery as opposed to immediate response.

The focus "shifted to the vagaries of disaster relief, with plenty of finger-pointing, second-guessing and political opportunism," (Picard, 2005, A19). Questions began to surface concerning how to fix New Orleans and who should be in charge of fixing the levees and the city. Though the details of such efforts are beyond the scope of this study, it is worthy to note that foreign expertise was sought after, especially that of Netherlands, which has the most sophisticated levee system in the world. Therefore, despite initial reactions to international help, further recovery efforts were conjoined with foreign researchers and experts.

Conclusion

Katrina brought a broad range of human reactions to the surface: from shock to compassion to anger and even to resentment. However, a sense of empathy also resonated across the globe, together with the urge to help those affected. The shock of the US's seemingly

indifference to the suffering of its own people, stirred the international world. The broad range of fundraising and donations, large and small, donated and/or rejected, proved that the world cared about what happened to New Orleanians impacted by the storm. Many attempted to draw lessons for the future from this event, while others depicted the continuous inefficiency of the US government. Such differences came to light depending on where the response originated. Countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, and even Iran offered to help by sending basic supplies of blankets, tents, and even crude oil (from Venezuela), however such offers were oftentimes intertwined with political undermining and the intention to humiliate the US government (Voice of America, 2005). Consequently, they were politely rejected. Other governments that were part of G8 with economic ties but also those who shared historical alliances with US, offered genuine help and messages of compassion.

In most cases, Katrina serviced as a catalyst for their own assessment of preparedness for potential disasters and development of plans of action. Most of the countries within the G8 already have a preexisting disaster plan (Canada, France, German, Japan), and was eager to share perspectives on what US could have used at the time of disaster, especially which services would have proved to be most useful. However, no international media perspective could be considered without implications on foreign policy. The involvement of the US in war in Iraq and Afghanistan seemed to be the most questioned topic, questioning why such ventures are accepted while domestic policies have clearly been disregarded. From that point on, a deeper look at the responsible bodies for the failures of response became a main topics of discussion.

Chapter 8: Future for Culturally Relevant Post-Disaster Programming: Summary of Research and Recommendations

The word *education* is derived, we should remember, from the Latin word *educare*, meaning, “to lead out.” What more fitting a response could there be to what we have been calling the sign continuum of disaster than to learn how to go beyond it?

--Susan Searls Giroux, 2010, p. 186

As I sit at a coffee shop in Bogota, Colombia, having experienced an earthquake just this morning, February 2012, of 5.3 magnitude on the Richter scale, I listen to conversations of individuals surrounding the current higher education reform riots in Colombia and protests as well as fears of a new rainy season destroying more people’s homes than last year, and the limited amount of government sponsored programs to help in recovery efforts. My mind immediately springs with ideas of what could be done and what international resources could be used, and types of international university partnerships that could be built. My experiences with the recovery after hurricane Katrina, specifically my work at RV comes to mind. The truth is always very complicated. The amount of red tape and corruption is still prevalent in all post-disaster contexts, especially here in Colombia; community members and their local charity organizations, mostly Catholic church groups, do a lot of recovery efforts. Thinking about these current events, brought me back to thinking about DEP and they type circumstances we had to work in.

At first glance, DEP and its operations appeared to be chaotic and haphazard. With its new partnerships, LSU volunteers and students, lack of facilities, limited access to facilities and finally changing site of operations, DEP operated in unusual circumstances with constant uncertainty looming over its head similarly to that of the Hurricane Katrina evacuees, however with less amount of repercussions if DEP failed in its efforts. The memory of RV will forever be in my heart and frequently on my mind. It has been that way for over six years. The most vivid

memory for me is the mental image of RV's fenced borders and security guards patrolling the premises, dust rising every time anyone took a step until walking onto the only paved road, while in the distance few fixtures stuck out as different from the general sea of white trailers. It is as if the image has become a permanent picture in my mind. The little white tent that served as a catalyst for all DEP programmatics, now standing alone with ripped sides from extensive usage, and the wind whirling through its empty innards with nothing to break its speed replays in my mind. Images of Rosie O'Donnell's facilities are intermixed with memories of frustration as well as joy, and all the while heavy rainclouds hanging from the sky taunting everyone with things past, giving RV a suspenseful atmosphere and a feeling of dread. Not many people have witnessed the full extent of RV's development, from its inception to its final days when moving trucks came to dismantle the playground and final removal of the last trailers. Looking back at all the events, it seems as though all these things passed in the blink of an eye. WE touched so many people's lives but whether they had lasting effects, we may never know. I know for sure that at the time of RV's existence I would not have been able to complete a dissertation due to my strong emotional attachment to the program and its participants. Allowing almost 4 years to lapse between the experience and analysis has also allowed for me to avoid emotional bias when analyzing field notes and personal journal entries. With a clearer mindset, I was able to more objectively look at the events that transpired. Coupled with interviews with study participants several lessons could be drawn from the events that past.

Lessons Drawn and Suggestions

Cultural Relevance in DEP

My guiding questions involved looking at cultural relevance, how it was present in DEP and whether it was a contributing factor to DEP's longevity. However, in the final analysis, the

answer was more complicated than I initially thought. According to the interviewees, cultural elements were not initially distinguished as a primary leading force of the program, however with further probing, the inclusion of cultural elements did emerge as important factors in the development of trust and relationships with DEP participants and RV community members. However, these answers also differed based on the triptych stage of DEP.

In the initial stage of DEP, the coordinators admitted that culture was found in some aspects of our response, however it did not lead the efforts. Understandably, this took place when LSU and Major West Coast institution were still developing their relationship with the idea of creating digital stories with RV residents; therefore, the majority of efforts were spent on developing strategies to address this technological need. However, with time and evidence that the site, as well as the residents, were not ready for such a program to take place, activities were developed that targeted the needs of the residents. This included developing items such as replacement scrapbooks that they had lost in the flood. Playing games that reminded them of New Orleans and friends (dominoes, hopscotch, etc.). Building a program with whatever tools and feedback provided from participants made us the bricoleurs of response (Bruner, 1965). The use of games and small discussions may appear to be a basic form of engagement for children but according to Bruner these tools are an integral part of the “pedagogical first-aid kit” (Bruner, 1965, p. 25). Their use is vital when dealing with unusual populations and in trying to discover a connection between parties. Therefore, our cultural responsiveness was evident.

In the second stage of DEP where EDUC 2000 students were the primary source – cultural relevance was also featured, however, not in the efforts surrounding RV residents, but for the students themselves. This was a surprising find for me. Although using the story circle in class was a method developed by a civil right activist from New Orleans, as well as other cultural

aspects in classroom environment, I did not think that they had significant effect on the students. However, reflecting back on their answers and analyzing responses, those students were affected by the hurricane and needed assistance as well. Finding a class that went beyond conventional forms of learning, but rather delved into their cultural forms of learning, proved to be responsive to their needs. Therefore, future post-disaster response attempts need to also address that of university students using cultural forms of learning rather than pedagogies.

In the third stage of DEP, having moved into the Family Center and reinstating the connection with the community members that had been partially lost in the second stage, we were able to finally address the needs of RV residents on their terms. Cultural responsiveness manifested itself through group gatherings, storytelling, and developing activities that all participants identified with. However, this was possible once we isolated ourselves from other service providers and allowed the residents to freely express themselves. Changing sites proved to be beneficial for all parties involved. For us, we regained our sense of flexibility, for residents the programmatic became more context sensitive and receptive to their needs.

With each new stage, cultural elements were present or emerged overtime; however, they were not the sole items that helped DEP survive through those years. All of the study participants agree that it was trust between DEP participants and staff, but most of all perseverance of DEP that drove the programming forward. The mutual respect of all parties allowed for such fluid nature of the DEP to continue, constantly adapting to new changes, while keeping the idea of being responsive at heart. By always showing up at designated times and keeping an eye out for further adaptations, the RV residents had come to know DEP as a common fixture in their community. Understanding where they came from and what was important to them, allowed for responsive programming to be developed. Therefore, in order to develop a responsive program

the recipients' history and culture has to be appreciated (Novins et al., 2004), as well as their past and present contexts.

We need to see the practical activity by which ordinary people manage cultural complexity and the interfaces among social worlds...we must also see collective identities/ways of life as internally contested, boundaries as overlapping and porous, and people inhabiting more than one social world at a time (Calhoun, 1995, p. 47).

Having gone through the hurricane and moved into RV, the residents experienced a cultural shock. They could not fully express or exercise their cultural practices and therefore looked for those who reminded them or at least kept an open mind as to what they needed culturally. In that aspect, DEP served in the capacity of being context sensitive. Though not always understandings of certain elements but always open to learn and ask questions, mutual learning took place. My recommendation for future programming is to begin with consideration for context whether local or international.

Context does indeed matter, and the geopolitical relations of the 21st century will require the forging of more equal partnerships between all systems and personnel engaged in international educational development. These must be partnerships that recognize the importance of cultural differences, and the need for improved mediation between the global and the local, if successful education innovation is to be achieved, (Crossley, 2002, p. 82).

Education systems should work toward recognizing localized needs and prospects while using those elements in building the local curriculum with an eye on the future. Using local goals as opposed to governmental goals, and preparing students to become cognizant as to how their setting fits into the larger, international context (DuBois, 1965; Gandhi, 1957).

Another lesson that emerged from the RV experience was the consideration of dynamics and the aims between and among service providers. When researching literature on service provider relations with other service providers, I found that no one speaks of such interactions

other than building partnerships that were either successful or not. However, no one mentions what happens in between the lines, and especially in a post-disaster setting.

Cynical Side of Service

When a disaster strikes, many individuals feel the compulsion to help, but in most cases they simply donate basic items. However, in many cases these donations fail to accommodate the local needs and circumstances (Smith, 2010). As seen with the Apple laptops, donated in 2006 to RV children, that could not be distributed; there were 20 laptops and 500 children at the time, and no infrastructure for them to be able to use them in a constructive manner until 2007. Even then, they were dedicated to only one set of activities (Smolen, 2006, 2007). Many also made monetary donations to organizations such as the American Red Cross, in faith that the organization has better knowledge of what the affected population needed most. However, the truth at RV was the money from American Red Cross donations were misappropriated like many other organization's funding (Strom, 2006). The general sense of disorganization among charity groups was as pervasive as any government response at the time, and coordination between groups was lacking in every aspect, more specifically, FEMA's dismissal of non-profits in disaster response.

While nonprofits and faith-based organizations are generally acknowledged to be an integral part of the [disaster] response architecture, and in fact shoulder some official responsibility for providing critical human services in a crisis, FEMA's relationship and support to the field — especially beyond its relationship to the American Red Cross — has the feel of an afterthought. Limited high-level attention gets directed toward the broader sector...No effective coordinating structure existed to integrate the multitude of charitable organizations that responded. FEMA and the American Red Cross disagreed as to their roles and responsibilities in coordinating the broader nonprofit sector, (Pipa, 2006, p. 24).

Inefficiency was pervasive when trying to coordinate organizations to determine in what capacity they might contribute or further the recovery efforts. As a result, the majority of the

organizations felt that they were left to their own devices since it was unclear who was in charge and to whom they might be reporting their activity and how many evacuees were receiving their services. For the first year of recovery efforts, in BRAF was the one coordinating many of the smaller non-profits as well as directing university officials to where they might attach or target their forms of help (Pipa, 2006; Smolen, 2006). However, as several organizations were entering the same sites, a tacit competition began as to whose program will survive the longest and maintain the most amount of participants. Though I cannot say that this took place at other sites around Baton Rouge, such practices were clearly visible at RV.

Appropriation of participants from other programs was pervasive as well as exaggerating number of participants for the sake of reporting-became a common practice. Further, stifling attempts for coordinating activities in an effort to avoid replicating practices was also a common sight. It is my belief that this was done to portray to their organization's higher powers how efficient and effective their program was, as well as how many individuals they were able to reach through their efforts. Rather than expanding the area of support, it became a nonprofit ego-game. In the case of LC, the argument was constantly thrown around for overcoming the hegemonic power of LSU, and being able to trump our efforts by demeaning our role into a secondary place. It was equivalent as to calling us "the help" rather than partners. This was rather evident through "accidental" forwarded emails by Renard to DEP's staff, in which sneering comments were made about LSU and our students (Smolen, 2008). The lack of professionalism on and off site never ceased to amaze me, especially when it was done in front of the RV residents and participants of the after-school program. In the end, many of the other organizations, including DEP, were bullied sufficiently to accept the role that was given to them but all the while disparaging that the only individuals who are suffering from these nonprofit

ego-games were the RV children and families themselves. That is not to say that the activities conducted by LFRC and others were futile and non-responsive; rather they were narrow-minded. Although improving standardized test score is important in this day and age in the current public school system as a measurement of student success, it hardly extends to helping the individuals in other aspects of their lives. While experiencing different forms of displacement (residential, social, and educational), RV residents needed assistance that extended beyond replicating educational practices from school (completion of homework sheets dominating the after-school program activities). However, this was an easily measureable factor and goal. Despite constant reassurances and IRB affidavits for ethical sharing of data, this too became a futile attempt and thus an integral part of the ego-game in the effort to determine whose ego gets to be on top.

Similarly, the partnership with major West Coast institution was in many ways a success but also a failure. The willingness of individuals to come together across institutions and states was an exciting opportunity for both; however, with the rigid agenda dictated by Major West Coast institution and lack of trust from those on the ground, all contributed to the overall failure of the partnership. Therefore, future multi-university partnerships should leave sufficient amount of flexibility in the agenda to first learn what the site can facilitate as far as activities and conduct more in-depth interest and needs inventories of future participants/recipients. After these steps are done, programs need to build partnerships that can accommodate such needs and look toward innovative programs to be developed with all cultural factors considered, as opposed to developing a program blindly. This approach highly resembles that of typical Western organizations entering an international site and implementing a pre-determined Western model program, which oftentimes fail for not considering local circumstances (Crossley, 2002; Kagawa, 2005).

Needless to say, the experiences with partnerships and certain service providers was one of the most discouraging parts of my DEP experience. Rather than using the additional resources that come from a local university, it became a game of which individuals would succumb to those in charge of the Rosie O'Donnell facilities. Luckily, there was a sufficient amount of other programs in other trailers willing to build partnerships. Therefore, having a multitude of different organizations present at the same site was a beneficial element in disaster response, because it created opportunities to address various needs through various venues. Other organizations, such as Catholic Charities, saw LSU as a valuable partner with a broader amount of resources available to relieve some of the burden as far as manpower for a program for teens, and development of programmatics (Smolen, 2008). Therefore, I cannot say that building partnerships is disadvantageous. When partnerships complement each other and work in a symbiotic manner, such relationships help the community and those receiving the assistance. However before any future partnerships are built, future programs need to conduct an introspective analysis of what their mission should be in accordance with the circumstances at hand as well as the type of population to be served. Considering that if another hurricane comes through New Orleans, the damage would not be the same, the majority of the population would have gone through the 2005 experience and therefore become re-traumatized, services that would be used in the next recovery. Therefore, replicating the same types of programs previously used, would be futile since circumstances and needs would have changed. For that reason, I propose the following blue print for future programs to consider.

Recommendation for a Blue Print for Future Programming

During the course of DEP's existence many lessons were learned, especially on my part. By entering a site that was so full of uncertainty and fear, all of my adaption skills acquired over

the course of my lifetime were tested on various fronts. Stepping into a displaced cultural site and attempting to develop a successful program from scratch was a challenge for all parties involved. From gaining access to the site, to securing program participants, to dealing with rapacious service provider competition, DEP still managed to survive. Some of the factors and lessons that contributed to our survival are elements that could be replicated in future disaster sites across the world and can serve as elements in the blue print for culturally relevant planning. These elements include:

Table 3. Recommendations for Culturally Relevant Post-Disaster Program Blue Print

Suggested elements	Description of the elements
Development of Trust	The most important element in any culture or community is to develop credibility among participants but also community leaders
Inclusion of Community Members as Program Staff and Programmatic Planning	Hiring or working with volunteers from the affected population assures faster development of trust but also assists in the learning process of local cultural practices, forms of thinking, and in the assessment of targeted needs
Development of Activities Relevant to Audience and Culture	Adjusting activities and agenda to community needs and developing delivery methods consistent with cultural forms of learning; using community volunteers and participants as main informants to the appropriateness of activities and forms of delivery
Flexibility and Adaptation	Understanding circumstances change once recovery efforts from other agencies also progress, adapting to new community needs is key. This may include changing site of operation or targeting a new group of affected population
Consistency of Presence	Securing a fixed schedule for all programming and showing up to all pre-agreed upon sessions with community partners

Though the list may appear short and its categories broad, it is important to consider that post-disaster circumstances cannot operate on specific elements, rather specific themes. As mentioned previously, every disaster differs by the type of population being affected, locale,

culture, and preexisting history of the site; all contributing to distinctive needs. As seen at RV, entering a site with a predetermined agenda, such as the development of digital stories, did not serve the population in any way nor did it address their immediate need, nor was there infrastructure to accommodate such agenda. Not surprisingly, in that aspect the program failed. However, through the development of trust and dedication of time, other aspects of community needs were addressed instead.

Development of Trust

Having the flexibility from LSU COE's administration to conduct any type of activity that would service the population proved also one of the most important elements. The trust from higher powers enabled DEP to fluidly adjust to RV residents' needs. The battles that ensued with other service providers were usually dealt with by COE's administrators or others higher than myself, allowing me to focus on LSU students and DEP participants and their needs. Therefore the element of "Development of Trust" does not only extend to the population being served but also having the confidence in your agency's mission and giving sufficient amount of trust and flexibility to their staff to not waste time or funding on unresponsive activities. Consequently, this also demands a sufficient amount of time to determine responsive aspects of programming. Further, additional time is needed to establish a trust base with the recipient community and its members. This does not take place easily or over a well-determined timeframe, as seen with DEP where in 2006 a productive relationship was built with parents and children. Having hired RV parents to oversee discipline and provide feedback in the activities that were conducted, and most of all showing up every week at a designated time, assured the RV community that we were there for a longer period of time. Therefore, as a lesson for the future, through inclusion of

parental or community involvement in program development the process of development of trust can be accelerated and solidified.

Inclusion of Community Members as Program Staff and Programmatic Planning

In many ways, this particular item seems logical in any attempt to rebuild a community after a tragic event. However, few use this opportunity in education, beyond hiring or rehiring local teachers to help conduct activities or church leaders to gain access to community and gain participants. Opening the doors to any willing volunteer from the affected population to assist in program development proved to be extremely beneficial for DEP, until other service providers got involved. In the first months of DEP, we had a horticulturalist, cancer patient, former business owner, and retired individuals helping us create the program but also getting children to come and share stories. The diverse backgrounds provided insight as to their lives and how they all fare during those liminal times. Sharing their strategies of coping or lack thereof, helped in determining extensions for DEP seeking out partners who could help with their additional expertise. This dynamic returned once DEP's operations were extended into the Family Center, where once again more responsive activities ensued (Smolen, 2008). Therefore, providing assistance that is contextual and culture-sensitive is vital for successful long-term programming (Leeuw, 2002).

Development of Activities Relevant to Audience and Culture

Together with community input and expertise from an organization, such DEP and LSU, activities can be developed and adapted to form a responsive plan of action. Properly listening to what the community partners are conveying as far as needs and learning how they previously addressed those needs, serve as valuable learning opportunities. Having learned that before Katrina, a majority of the adults never needed to write a resume to get a job but rather relied on

their neighborhood social network to do so, helped in understanding why now, in these new circumstances, obtaining employment was so difficult (Smolen, 2008). With that in mind, teaching the adults strategies and who to contact for information was one of the responsive activities conducted. Further, a workshop was developed to help adults build a resume. Such examples portray symbiotic relationships between service recipients and providers. And further, provide the recipients with new sets of tools and knowledge base that would be useful in their future displacements. However, this comes with great amount of flexibility on both parties and especially preparedness of the recipients to address new needs in their lives.

Flexibility and Adaptation

The flexibility and adaption aspect of the blueprint deals with an overall attitude of the program and approach to programmatics. Understandably, many organizations would not uphold such loose forms of program development, however this is an important aspect I am suggesting be kept in mind, that while dealing with communities and their cultures, these entities are not static, and therefore demand room for adjustment once particular needs are met to be able to move on to the next. Just as DEP was able to address needs of RV teens through the development of Teen Fun Night by RV adult demands, so too, do future programs need to keep an open agenda to unexpected program extensions. Though many organization will have to have a predetermined goal and objective to be able to substantiate their presence at their site of operation, I suggest that broad categories be used in the effort to leave sufficient amount of flexibility in case needs change. In the case of DEP, the goal was to develop an education program, the agenda however, only considered one solid factor that was attempted, digital stories, but the rest of the programming was open to suggestion to community partners.

Furthermore, overtime educational needs changed: with the Rosie O'Donnell facilities was dedicated to standardized testing and students' scores, but new opportunities became apparent such as adult learning and informal education programming for young adults. Such progression could not have been possible if not for the flexibility granted to us by the COE administration as well as like-minded partners. Adhering to the bricoleur's ideology, new programs need to be adaptive, using community informants to drive the development of programmatic while keeping innovation in mind.

Consistency of Presence

The last aspect is the most important element in the blue print. Without continuous presence at a site, trust cannot be developed between the community members, service-providers, and program participants. In a post-disaster setting, the affected population has already experienced sufficient amounts of instability and uncertainty. As a form of reassurance, any form of consistency shows dedication to their cause as well as dispels notions of fast-food-like services.

Community needs, policy decisions, and public issues change quickly and contribute to an ever-shifting environment that is hard to grasp from afar or through irregular visits. A consistent presence can reduce risk and immeasurably increase the effectiveness of unfolding grant programs, providing an institutional funder with deeper inroads into the local nonprofit community, even if the primary interest is in the recovery and rebuilding stages, (Pipa, 2006, p. 36).

Delineating a long-term presence with consistent schedules will not only appease the recipients' mind but also that of the funders. Such programs allow for researching long-term effects of the program as opposed to short, impulsive, post-disaster response activities. Specifically, international responses usually have defined short timelines (Kagawa, 2005), eliminating such element might allow for better response to take place. Further, taking the extended time to train

locals while helping them develop their own training materials would encourage self-sufficiency with lasting effects.

Future Research Opportunities

Inclusion of Culture in Emergency Education

I believe that one of the most fascinating facets that is largely unexplored includes the involvement of cultural practices in Emergency Education. Examining how cultural elements could contribute to more efficient forms of educational response is a topic that is largely not discussed but deserves further inquiry. Many international relief agency workers would agree that such elements are important, however academic literature on this topic is limited. Using the experiences from Katrina and dealing with such a unique culture all in itself can be used as an example for future programming. With a constant amount of natural disasters across the globe, and an increasing homogenization of cultures through globalization, responding to disasters in locally cultural relevant ways can also help in preserving cultural practices before they disappear.

Cultural Forms of Learning in University Classrooms

Existing literature describes how certain service-learning courses help students recover from a disaster, through engagement in service component, is important as a consideration for disaster response. However, a paucity of literature exist as to adapting higher education classroom pedagogy to more culturally relevant practices. The element of service in service-learning is meant to solidify and put into context theoretical elements learned in the classroom and embedded in course goals (Eyler & Giles, 1997). It seems evident to improve the practice by making classroom experience more culturally significant beyond specific readings, and localizing learning from local cultures.

Oeuvre of My Experience

In many ways, I think RV taught me a great deal than I learned in any classroom. Government officials, paperwork, service providers, adult, teenagers, and elementary learners, university faculty and many others, were my teachers. I will never forget them. The negative experiences taught me as much if not more, than positive experiences. I learned a great deal about research and ethical issues. Even now I can still hear Mr. Harvey saying, “Jola, history doesn’t stop, it’s how you want to look at it, but watch out or it will pass you” (Smolen, 2008). I believe that RV will remain one of my most important historical moments not clouded by the Katrina fatigue that ran rampant across the nation. But those who were not involved in the recovery effort and took time to consider the context, culture, and its people did not fully comprehend the difficulties that evacuees faced. Further, these experiences helped shape the notion of “Educational Terrorism,” a term coined by Jewett, who is still in the process of developing the full theoretical spectrum of the term. However, the term is based on tactical strategies employed by various environmental fluctuations, contributing to eco-terrorism. Through my experiences, I believe that this concept can be extended into the work of post-disaster education programming where non-profit organizations adhere to the idea of biopolitics (Saltman, 2007). By dictating who receives assistance and services, the particular non-profit organizations exercised their bio-power to further command what activities are deemed educationally appropriate and who is eligible in their eyes to receive them. Such practices are also rampant among international development circles and international Non-Government Organizations (Bell & Carens, 2004; Saltman, 2007). However, no one has claimed this as a forced measure upon the affected population, who have no choice but to accept the services as they are presented. With Emergency education being a nascent field, I believe that educational

terrorism needs to be added to the scope of theoretical exploration and let cultural relevance lead future national and international post-disaster educational programming efforts.

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Appendix A
Formal In-Depth Interview Protocol

Name: _____

Age: _____ Pseudonym: _____

Demographic data:

1. Where were you born? Raised? Graduated high school?
2. Where were you living when Hurricane Katrina hit?
3. What experiences remain the most vivid regarding Hurricanes Katrina?
4. How did you hear about Delta Express Program (DEP)?
5. Why did you decide to join DEP?
6. What was your role in DEP?
7. Why did you choose to take EDUC 2000, Working with Children in Crisis, many times?

Exploring the presence of culture

8. What were your first impressions of Renaissance Village and its residents?
9. What sorts of subjects or topics did RV residents address frequently?
10. How was culture or cultural elements included in DEP/at RV?

Inclusion of culture in DEP

11. Describe how DEP was culturally responsive.
12. Describe how DEP was not culturally responsive.
13. In retrospect, how could educational programming have been more responsive to the children of RV (list examples)?

Surrealism understood by participants

14. Many have described Katrina and it's aftermath as 'surreal,' how do you understand the word 'surreal?'

Perspectives

15. Since your participation with DEP, has your perception of Katrina changed?
16. How has your perception of international disasters changed?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B

Where are the Children?: Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children at the Renaissance Village – IRB

LSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

05/12/2006

IRB APPLICATION: APPROVAL OF PROJECTS WHICH USE HUMAN SUBJECTS

The IRB uses this form to obtain succinct answers to questions it must consider. If incomplete, your application will be returned! You can download this form and all other IRB documents from <http://www.lsu.edu/irb> & complete it with your word processor. Call Robert Mathews for assistance, 225-578-8692, or e-mail him at: irb@lsu.edu.

When this application is submitted to the IRB please include:

- Two copies of this completed form.
- A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects)
- Copies of all instruments to be used. If this proposal is a part of a grant application include a copy of the grant proposal, the investigative brochure (if one exists) and any recruitment materials including advertisements intended to be seen or heard by potential subjects.
- The consent form that you will be using. A copy of the Waiver of Signed Informed Consent is attached and must be completed only if you do not intend to use a signed consent form.
- Copies of your IRB stamped consent form must be used in obtaining consent.
- Certificate of Completion for Human Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project (including students who are involved with testing and handling data) at <http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp> (Unless already on file with the IRB.)

=====
(IRB Use: IRB# _____ Review Type: Expedited _____ Full _____)
=====

Part 1: General Information

1. Principal Investigator: M. Jayne Fleener Rank: Professor
(PI Must be an LSU Faculty member)

Dept.: College of Education Ph: 8-1258

E-mail: fleener@lsu.edu

Co-investigators*: _____

*Student? Y/N ___ Thesis/dissertation/class project? Y/N ___

Dept.: _____ Ph: _____

E-mail: _____

2. Project Title: Where are the Children?: Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children at the Renaissance Village

3. Proposed duration (months): 8 Start date: December 01, 2007

4. Funding sought from: This is part of a larger projected funded by the Campus Compact.

5. LSU Proposal #: _____ 6. Number of subjects requested: 100

6. Are you obtaining any health information from a health care provider that contains any of the identifiers listed below? No

A. Names

B. Address: street address, city, county, precinct, ZIP code, and their equivalent geocodes. Exception for ZIP codes: The initial three digits of the ZIP Code may be used, if according to current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census: (1) The geographic unit formed by combining all ZIP codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and (2) the initial three digits of a ZIP code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to '000'. (Note: The 17 currently restricted 3-digit ZIP codes to be replaced with '000' include: 036, 059, 063, 102, 203, 556, 692, 790, 821, 823, 830, 831, 878, 879, 884, 890, and 893.)

C. Dates related to individuals

i. Birth date

ii. Admission date

iii. Discharge date

iv. Date of death

v. And all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age. Such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older.

D. Telephone numbers;

E. Fax numbers;

F. Electronic mail addresses;

G. Social security numbers;

H. Medical record numbers; (including prescription numbers and clinical trial numbers)

I. Health plan beneficiary numbers;

J. Account numbers;

K. Certificate/license numbers;

L. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers including license plate numbers;

M. Device identifiers and serial numbers;

N. Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);

O. Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers;

P. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints;

Q. Full face photographic images and any comparable images; and

R. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code; except a code used for re-identification purposes; and

S. The facility does not have actual knowledge that the information could be used alone or in combination with other information to identify an individual who is the subject of the information.

YES Your study falls under the HIPAA (Health Information Privacy and Accountability Act) and you must obtain either a limited data set use agreement or a HIPAA authorization agreement from the health care provider. This agreement must be submitted with your IRB protocol.

☒ NO You do not need a HIPAA agreement.

A. ASSURANCE: PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (named above)

I accept personal responsibility for the conduct of this study (including ensuring compliance of co-investigators/co-workers in accordance with the documents submitted herewith and the following guidelines for human subject protection: The Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with OPRR, and 45 CFR 46 (Available from OSP or at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>)

Signature of PI _____ Date _____

B. ASSURANCE OF STUDENT/PROJECT COORDINATOR named above

I agree to adhere to the terms of this document and am familiar with the documents referenced above.

Signature _____ Date _____

p.2

Part 2: Project Abstract - provide a brief abstract of the project.
Project Abstract

The College of Education has been involved in providing after school and enrichment activities for the children of the Renaissance Village (RV) since its opening in January, 2006. The initial work focused on providing immediate relief to the residents of the Renaissance Village, the state's largest FEMA trailer village where 550+ travel trailers and 1,600+ displaced residents now live. In April of 2006, of the 700 children on site, 154 were recorded as attending school. In September of 2006, 120 attend school from a population of 450 students. This lack of participation in formal education is a crisis.

After working for over a year at the RV Trailer Park, we are perplexed as to why such a large proportion of children are not attending school. In order to provide future services and meet the needs of the families in the RV, we want to explore the factors inhibiting school matriculation. This exploratory study will collect data from a variety of sources including focus group interviews, individual informant interviews, interviews with other service providers, and journal entries of LSU students participating in service learning classes.

Part 3: Research Protocol

A: Describe study procedures

Describe study procedures with emphasis on those procedures affecting subjects and safety measure. Also provide script for telephone surveys.

This exploratory study will collect data from a variety of sources including focus group interviews, individual informant interviews, interviews with other service providers, and journal entries of LSU students participating in service learning classes.

Focus Groups: We have worked closely with RV residents in the after-school program. We will enlist support from resident collaborators to bring together a focus group of parents to discuss the educational needs of their children. Specifically, we will ask open ended questions about educational opportunities for and barriers to their children's full participation in school.

Individual Interviews:

- a. RV Educational Services Coordinators - We have worked closely with all administrative levels in our educational outreach efforts. We will individually meet with key personnel to collect quantitative and

qualitative data about children's participation in education. These data will include: numbers of children at the RV; numbers attending school; how numbers are derived; numbers registered for and participating in after school programs; average length of stay of students in the RV; where students are going to school; logistics of transportation to school; additional services provided to the children and families of the RV; information about the special academic needs of the children; information about adult academic needs (including literacy rates); issues and/or challenges experienced related to school attendance; special services or accommodations provided by schools.

- b. Other Service Providers: Throughout our participation at the RV, we have worked with a network of service providers including Advance Baton Rouge, the Children's Coalition, Big Buddies, City Year, UC Links, and the Hole in the Wall Foundation. We will ask key individuals from each of these organizations to provide their perspectives on children's school participation.
- c. Children Interviews: We are interested in hearing from the children about their educative experiences. For the younger children, we will elicit education metaphors through drawings, stories and other artifacts (with parental consent). For the older children, we will likewise elicit verbal metaphors (school is like ...) as well as engage them in a direct conversation about their educative experiences and their impressions about why some students have chosen to or not to participate in formal education.
- d. LSU Student Artifacts: Journal entries and diablogs will be collected from the students who are part of EDUC 2000, EDCI 2001, KIN 4112 courses. These journals will reflect their experiences from RV and their reactions to the activities and interactions with the children.

B: Answer each of the following questions.

1. Why is the use of human subjects necessary? (v.s. animals/in vitro)

This study is an exploratory effort to determine factors that inhibit some children at the RV to participate in formal education. To this goal, interviews with the residents and key service providers are vital components to the success of this study. The results will serve as guidelines for future actions in addressing issues on truancy and matriculation.

2. Specify sites of data collection.

The main site for this study will be Renaissance Village in Baker, Louisiana.

3. If surgical or invasive procedures are used, give name, address, and telephone number of supervising physician and the qualifications of the person(s) performing the procedures. Comparable information when qualified participation or supervision is required or appropriate.

N/A

4. Provide the names, dosage, and actions of any drugs or other materials administered to the subjects and the qualifications of the person(s) administering the drugs.

N/A

5. Detail all the physical, psychological, and social risks to which the subjects may be exposed.

None

6. What steps will be taken to minimize risks to subjects?

The investigators uphold responsible and respectful treatment of any participants as their top priority. Prior to conducting interviews with younger participants, consent forms will require signatures from parents or legal guardians.

7. Describe the recruitment pool (community, institution, group) and the criteria used to select and exclude subjects.

Children: For younger children, participation will be determined whether the consent forms were signed by a parent or a legal guardian. For older children, participation will be sought upon voluntary basis.

Focus Groups: The participants will be chosen based upon their current residency (RV). Furthermore, participation will be upon voluntary basis.

LSU students: Participation will be determined upon enrollment in EDUC 2000, EDCI 2001, and KIN 4112 courses.

Shorter version: Children: For younger children, participation will be determined whether the consent forms were signed by a parent or a legal guardian. For older children, participation will be sought upon voluntary basis.

Focus Groups: The participants will be chosen based upon their current residency (RV), and upon voluntary basis. LSU students: Participation will be determined upon enrollment in: EDUC 2000, EDCI 2001 and KIN 4112 courses.

8. List any vulnerable population whose members are included in this project (e.g., children under the age of 18; mentally impaired persons; pregnant women; prisoners; the aged.)

Children
Renaissance Village residents

9. Describe the process through which informed consent will be obtained (Informed consent usually requires an oral explanation, discussion, and opportunity for questions before seeking consent form signature.)

The focus group participants: will be introduced to the parameters of the study before the sessions begin. Once all participants are gathered, the focus group leader will discuss the purpose of the study and all of the implications surrounding the issues. Further, the leader will inform the participants of the option of withdrawal from the study at any time, without penalty

The children interviews: will only be held once the parent or legal guardian had been fully informed of the parameters of the study and given a copy of questions, prior to the interview to determine the

comfort of the child and the parent/guardian on the topics. The consent form will be requested to be signed after all questions and comments from the parent/legal guardian have been addressed. It will be emphasized that withdrawal from the study is an option, with no penalty or repercussions. This process will be done on individual basis.

Shorter version: The focus group: will be introduced to the parameters of the study before the sessions begin. The focus group leader will discuss the purpose of the study and all of the implications surrounding the issues. The children interviews: will only be held once legal guardian has been fully informed of the parameters of the study and given a copy of questions, prior to the interview to determine the comfort with the topic.

10. (A) Is this study anonymous or confidential? (Anonymous means that the identity of the subjects is never linked to the data, directly, or indirectly through a code system.)
(B) If a confidential study, details on how will the privacy of the subjects and security of their data will be protected.

B - This study is considered confidential. No real names will be mentioned or included in any of the publications if the participant does not feel comfortable with this decision. On the consent form, the participant may select a preference of using their real name or an alternate name. In focus group interviews, if all participants refuse to use real names, numbers will be used to refer to individual speakers. In case of children interviews, parents or legal guardians will also have an option whether they feel comfortable with using their child's real name or select an alternative, or a number.

Shorter version: B - This study is considered confidential. No real names will be mentioned or included in any of the publications if the participant does not feel comfortable with this decision. On the consent form, the participant may select a preference of using their real name, an alternate name, or a number.

Part 4: Consent Form (including Assent Form and Parental Permission Form if minors are involved)

Please note: The consent form must be written in non-technical language which can be understood by the subjects. It should be free of any exculpatory language through which the participant is made to waive, or appears to be made to waive any legal rights, including any release of the investigator, sponsor, institution or its agents from liability for negligence? (Note: the consent form is not a contract.)

Be sure to include the following items in your consent form:

1. **Study Title:**
Name of the study.
2. **Performance Sites:**
Where the study will be conducted.
3. **Contacts:**
The names and telephone numbers of

Project Report and Continuation Application

(Complete and return to IRB, 203-B1 David Boyd Hall.

Direct questions to IRB Chairman Robert Mathews 578-8692.)



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.6792
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

IRB#: 2752 Your Current Approval Expires On: Closed - request to activate

Review type: Expedited Risk Factor: minimal

PI: M. Jayne Flores Dept: _____ Phone: _____

Student/Co-Investigator: _____

Project Title: Where are the children?: Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children at the Renaissance Village

Number of Subjects Authorized: _____

Please read the entire application. Missing information will delay approval!

I. PROJECT FUNDED BY: _____ LSU proposal # _____

II. PROJECT STATUS: Check the appropriate blank(s); and complete the following:

- ☐ 1. Active, subject enrollment continuing; # subjects enrolled: _____
- ☐ 2. Active, subject enrollment complete; # subjects enrolled: _____
- ☐ 3. Active, subject enrollment complete; work with subjects continues.
- ☒ 4. Active, work with subjects complete; data analysis in progress.
- ☐ 5. Project start postponed
- ☐ 6. Project complete; end date / /
- ☐ 7. Project cancelled: no human subjects used.

III. PROTOCOL: (Check one).

- ☒ Protocol continues as previously approved
- ☐ Changes are requested*
 - List (on separate sheet) any changes to approved protocol.

IV. UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS: (did anything occur that increased risks to participants):

- State number of events since study inception: _____ since last report: _____
- If such events occurred, describe them and how they affect risks in your study.
- Have there been any **previously unreported** events? Y/N N
(if YES, attach report describing event and any corrective action).

V. CONSENT FORM AND RISK/BENEFIT RATIO:

Do new knowledge or adverse events change the risk/benefit ratio? Y/N N;

Is a corresponding change in the consent form needed? Y/N N

VI. ATTACH A BRIEF, FACTUAL SUMMARY of project progress/results to show continued participation of subjects is justified; or to provide a final report on project findings.

VII. ATTACH CURRENT CONSENT FORM (only if subject enrollment is continuing); and check the appropriate blank:

- ☒ 1. Form is unchanged since last approved
- ☐ 2. Approval of revision requested herewith: (identify changes)

Signature of Principal Investigator: M. Jayne Flores

Date: 04/14/11

IRB Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuation approved; Approval Expires: <u>4/17/12</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved
	<input type="checkbox"/> File closed
Signed <u>[Signature]</u>	Date <u>4/18/11</u>

Print Form

jsmole1@lsu.edu

NOTIFICATION of REPORT DUE



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.6792
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

Date: November 5, 2009

From: Robert C. Mathews, Chairman

To: M. Jayne Fleener
Education

IRB #: 2752

Title: Where are the Children?: Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children at the Renaissance Village

REC'D

NOV 04 2009

DEAN'S OFFICE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Approval Expiration: 12/14/2009

The IRB database shows that you have one or more active or un-terminated projects with human subjects. Federal regulations require that you file a report to permit the IRB to determine that approval of continued work with human subjects is appropriate. Lacking such a report, and IRB re-approval, the work must cease.

Notification by IRB

☒ First Notice

☐ Second Notice

☐ Third Notice

☐ Final Notice

IRB Action (this date)

☒ Notice: PI

☐ Notice: Chair/Head; cc: PI

☐ Notice: Dean/Director; cc: Chair/Head, PI

☐ Notice: Assoc VC, Office of Research & Economic Development;
cc: Dean/Director, Chair/Head, PI

ACTION REQUESTED

- ☒ PI: Please complete the attached Project Report/Continuation Application and submit to the IRB office immediately.
- ☐ Chair/Head: Please Assist in getting the Project Report/Continuation Application filed or providing adequate reasons for continuing delay.
- ☐ Dean/Director: Please Assist in getting the Project Report/Continuation Application filed or providing adequate reasons for continuing delay.
- ☐ AVC, Research: Please take this matter under consideration; PI has failed to respond to all notices from this office.



CAMPUS CORRESPONDENCE

Date: November 25, 2009
To: IRB
From: M. Jayne Fleener *my fleener*
Subject: Research Status Report and Request for Continuation

PROJECT TITLE:
Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children
IRB # 2752
November 25, 2009

Contacts:	Jayne Fleener	Jolanta Smolen
	Dean, College of Education	Graduate Student
	fleener@lsu.edu	jsmole1@tigers.lsu.edu
	O: 225-578-1258	O: 225-578-2254

Status of the Study:

For over three years, we have worked with children and their families who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina. We have completed our data collection and are in the process of analyzing the data. We anticipate on-going analyses for at least another year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Project Report and Continuation Application

(Complete and return to IRB, 203-B1 David Boyd Hall, Direct questions go to IRB Chairmen Mathews 578-8692.)



Institutional Report and Continuation Application

Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
F: 225.578.6792
P: 225.578.8692
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/irb

IRB#: #2752 Current Approval Expires On: 12-14-09

Review Type: Expedited Risk Factor: Minimal

PI: M. Jayne Fleener Dept: College of Education Phone: 578-1258

Student/Co-Investigator: Jolanta Smolen

Project Title: Where are the Children?: Understanding the Academic Needs of Displaced Children at the Renaissance Village

Number of Subjects Authorized: 100

Please read the entire application. Missing information will delay approval!

I. PROJECT FUNDED BY: NA LSU Proposal #: NA

II. PROJECT STATUS: Check the appropriate blank(s) and complete the following:

- ☐ 1. Active, subject enrollment continuing; # subjects enrolled:
- ☐ 2. Active, subject enrollment complete; # subjects enrolled:
- ☐ 3. Active, subject enrollment complete; work with subject continues.
- ☒ 4. Active, work with subjects complete; data analysis in progress.
- ☐ 5. Project start postponed
- ☐ 6. Project complete; end date:
- ☐ 7. Project cancelled: no human subjects used.

III. PROTOCOL: (Check one).

- ☒ Protocol continues as previously approved
- ☐ Changes are requested*
--List (on separate sheet) any changes to approved protocol.

IV. UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS: (did anything occur that increased risks to participants): NA

--State number of events since study inception: since last report:

--If such events occurred, describe them and how they affect risks in your study.

--Have there been any previously unreported events? Y/N

V. CONSENT FORM AND RISK/BENEFIT RATIO:

Do new knowledge or adverse events change the risk/benefit ratio? Y/N N

Is a corresponding change in the consent form needed? Y/N N

VI. ATTACH A BRIEF, FACTUAL SUMMARY of project progress/results to show continued participation of subjects is justified; or to provide a final report on project findings.

VII. ATTACH CURRENT CONSENT FORM (only if subject enrollment is continuing); and check the appropriate blank;

- ☒ 1. Form is unchanged since last approved
- ☐ 2. Approval of revision requested herewith: (identify changes)

Signature of Principal Investigator:

Wayne Deener

Date:

11-25-09

IRB Action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuation approved; Approval Expires: <input type="text"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved
	<input type="checkbox"/> File Closed
Signed _____ Date _____	

Print Form

Appendix C

Major West Coast Institution's Anthropology Syllabus

ANTHROPOLOGY 136H-001: SPECIAL TOPICS IN ARCHAEOLOGY -
PRACTICE IN A 6TH GRADE AFTERS CHOOOL PROGRAM

Instructor: Office hours: 8:00-9:00 a.m. @ Café Strada and by appointment	Graduate Student Instructor: Office Hours: 9:00- 11:00 @ Café Strada Tuesday's
After-School Program Manager: 653-8387 Office Hours: by appointment	After-School Program Site Coordinator:
Teaching Team mailing list Students & Instructors mailing list:	Course Web Site: TBA!!!

Meeting Times and Locations:

Class meets weekly at 2251 College, room 101, on Thursdays from 9-11 am. The Expedition after-school program is held at Roosevelt Middle School in the San Antonio neighborhood. You must choose one of three options for attending the after-school program: Wednesdays 1:30 – 4:30 p.m., Thursdays 2:45 – 5:45 p.m., or Fridays 2:45 – 5:45 p.m. Directions to Roosevelt will be distributed in class; carpool options will also be arranged in class.

Course Description:

This course is about ethnographic fieldwork, public archaeology, the anthropology of pedagogy and education, the anthropology of technology, and collaborative learning and the representation of culture. The course is designed to provide an opportunity for undergraduates to work with 6th graders in exploring the worlds of archaeology, history, and computer-based technologies. Students enrolled in Anthropology 136h are expected to mentor and play with children in Expedition, an after-school program at Roosevelt Middle School. Additionally, this course fulfills the methods requirement for Anthropology majors, providing an opportunity to learn and use a variety of ethnographic skills. The focus of the course this semester is encouraging the awareness of the multicultural nature of the meaning of material culture and its expression through digital storytelling.

The Expedition after-school program is designed to bring the archaeological experience to 6th graders through facilitated play with a variety of media, including: computer games, web browsing, hands-on exploration of real artifacts, multimedia creation, and digital storytelling. This program is voluntary for the 6th graders, and is being carried out in cooperation with the Roosevelt Village Center Collaborative at Roosevelt Middle School, which provides a variety of services to the community and other after-school activities.

This course is a collaborative effort. All participants (instructors, undergraduates, sixth-graders, community members) bring unique skills and experience that can enhance understanding and expand education in the true sense of the word. As a student enrolled in this class, you are considered to be a responsible, competent adult. Your insights are valuable, and you are encouraged to be an active

contributor to the learning process. You have the power to make this an exciting, vibrant experience for everyone involved.

This course and after-school program are sponsored and funded by the Archaeological Research Facility, Dept of Anthropology, Unified School District, and the Roosevelt Village Collaborative, and the [International Links] program of the University Office of the President.

This course satisfies the methods requirement for the Anthropology major and it can be repeated for credit.

Prerequisites:

An introductory course in Anthropology (preferably Anthro 2) is highly recommended.

You must have access to and know how to use both email and the Internet. The course has a website where you will have detailed information on assignments, announcements, and a discussion forum. *You should check the website frequently.* You will also post your field notes on-line. Also, a substantial amount of information will be disseminated via email. **Check your email daily** for announcements, information, and updates. You are responsible for managing your email account. If your yahoo or hotmail account goes over your quota, you may not receive important email from the teaching team. We recommend email accounts on calmail.major West Coast institution.edu. These accounts are free, accessible via the web, and offer a large 100-megabyte quota.

Course Field notes and Website:

Class participants must submit weekly field notes via email to the teaching team, and to the online database on the web: http://128.32.93.103/fmi/iwp/res/iwp_home.html, click on "journals". We will provide you with the user name and password. The field notes will be searchable and readable to all class participants on the web, and you will submit your weekly field notes directly on the Web. Further instructions on field notes submission will be given in class and on the course website.

Course Requirements:

Contact one of your instructors with any questions or concerns that you have as soon as you can. Read your syllabus. Pay attention to due dates and assignments. Be proactive in getting the assistance you need or in straightening out errors. Check the course website and your email frequently. The number following each course requirement indicates its percentage of your final grade.

THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE.**After-school Program Attendance and Performance (25%)**

After-school program attendance is very important. The children will grow very attached to you and notice if you are not there. Please don't disrupt their experiences through irregular attendance. In addition, you will be graded on your participation and performance in the after-school program. This grade is based on your enthusiasm, heartfelt respect for the children, responsible behavior, completion of assigned duties, and degree of effort demonstrated.

Class Attendance, Preparation, and Active Participation 205%)

Class attendance is mandatory. There is a lot of material to be covered in class – don't be late. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you miss roll, be sure to speak to Darren Modzelewski before you leave to ensure your attendance is noted.

In this small seminar setting, discussion comprises a major component of the class. Complete your readings **before** class on the day they are due. You will be asked to address a couple of questions to the readings in a 3-5 sentence paragraph and bring this with you to class. You will be required to engage in

discussion about the readings in small groups. The results of these small discussions will then be reported to the rest of the class. You will find what you have written is very useful in this context! You will also relate what you have written to your field observations. Reading assignments are listed in the week-by-week course outline at the end of this syllabus and are all available in the course reader.

Required Text (on reserve in the Anthropology Library, Kroeber Hall):

- Course Reader (will be available at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft Avenue, just west of Bowditch)
- Kozol, Jonathan. Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Years of Hope. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001. (Available for sale at ASUC bookstore)
-

If you are having difficulty with a particular reading or with the reading load, please talk with one of your instructors before the issue grows out of control.

Field Notes (20%)

As this is an anthropology methods course, your field notes are extremely important. You will record your observations of the after-school program in field note format each week. You have 24 HOURS from the end of each session you attend in which to email your field notes to instructors and post your field notes to the course website. After that time, your grade will suffer penalties that increase with the lateness of your posting. Any field notes posted after 6:00 p.m. on Saturday will not be accepted. If you are having problems with posting, contact one of your instructors immediately. More detailed information and discussion on how to take field notes will be given in class.

Project (15%)

Throughout the semester, you will each work on a project assignment that relates to the course content, and the After School program. We will discuss what we mean by this in early class meetings.

Final Research Paper or Digital Story (20%)

The final requirement of the course will be a 10-15-page research paper based on the class readings and your field notes and observations of the after-school program. More detailed instructions on this assignment will be distributed in class. We will provide some topics, but you are not limited to these topics. Students also have the option of creating a 10-15 min. digital story about their research topic instead of the written paper. The final version **MUST** be handed in as a QuickTime movie or DVD accompanied by a written script and storyboard (with citations). A prospectus of the sources and theme of your paper or digital story must be handed in/emailed on **October 26**. You will have a chance to discuss your final research papers or digital stories in class on **November 16**. **The research paper or digital story is due on December 7.**

Extra Credit

Students may have opportunities to earn extra credit during the semester. Multiple opportunities to earn extra credit points will be given, but students may only turn in **one** extra credit assignment for the entire semester. Opportunities for earning extra credit will be announced in class.

Course Policies:

Absences

Attendance at class and the after-school program is mandatory. **The only excused absences are if you are sick, or there is a death in your immediate family.** In order for your absence to be considered excused, you must contact [] as soon as you know you cannot make it, but no later than the morning of the day you will be absent. In addition, you must contact graduate assistants the day of your absence from the after-school program. Be sure to contact them **before the start time** of the after-school program. If

three consecutive class/after-school sessions are missed due to illness, you must submit a note from the Tang Center or your physician.

Documented Learning Disability

If you have a documented learning disability and are authorized to have special arrangements for assignments and tests, please let us know IN WRITING by the second week of class.

Grading

If you have concerns about a grade, please talk first with [instructor or graduate assistants]. [Professor on record] will, of course, be happy to talk with you as well; he retains final decision in the grading process. He will review your concerns and consider your grade.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted, unless you have made arrangements with the instructors ahead of time.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in a failing grade for the course. See the University Student Code of Conduct for information about plagiarism.

Appendix D

Study IRB: Retrospective Analysis of Delta Express: Culturally Relevant Post-Disaster Education Programming Mode

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/ projects using living humans as subjects, or samples, or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
131 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.6792
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/irb

- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at <http://www.lsu.edu/screeningmembers.shtml>

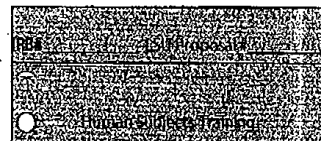
- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:

- (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of part B thru E.
- (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1&2)
- (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
*If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
- (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
- (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB. Training link: (<http://plp.ntraining.com/users/login.php>)
- (F) IRB Security of Data Agreement: (<http://www.lsu.edu/irb/IRB%20Security%20of%20Data.pdf>)

1) Principal Investigator: Dr. Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell Rank: Assistant Professor
Dept: ETPP Ph: 8-5998 E-mail: sdowell@lsu.edu

2) Co Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each

CO-INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION



IRB# E5551

4) Proposed? (yes or no) ☐ If Yes: I CEI Protocol Number ☐
Also, if YES, either ☐ This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant OR ☐ This application is a modification of the grant

5) Exempt? (a) Describe the exemption: ☐
*Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children <18; the mentally impaired; pregnant women, the aged, ether). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI Signature: Margaret Mary Sulentic Dowell Date: 6-8-11 (no per signatures)

I, the undersigned, certify that the information provided in this application is true and correct. If the project changes in later phases, I will resubmit for review. I will understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Study Exempted By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: 6-12-2014



Kristin A. Ganslee 06/13/2011 Exempted
RM

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

1. Study Title: Retrospective Analysis of Delta Express: A Culturally Relevant Post-disaster Education Programming Model
2. Performance Sites: Neutral Place, such as restaurant or a coffee shop
3. Investigators: The following investigator(s) are available for questions: Dr. Sulentic Dowell (225) 578-5998 or Jolanta Smolen (504) 578-5998
4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine culturally relevant programmatic and social aspects of DEP contributing to its longevity and/or success at Renaissance Village between 2006-2009.
5. Participant Inclusion: LSU EDUC 2000 students
6. Number of Participants: 6 EDUC 2000 students
7. Study procedures: Study participants will complete an in-depth formal interview lasting approximately one hour. This information will be combined with archival data from participants' EDUC 2000 course e-journals, and researcher's personal journal, as well as analysis of artifacts.
8. Benefits: Participation in the study may help in the development of more responsive international post-disaster education programs.
9. Risk: Minimal risk: names will not be recorded to prevent any risk of tracking data to the participant; pseudonyms will be selected. Data from interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home office and accessed only by the researcher during the study. A possible risk is that email correspondence could be hacked/tracked.
10. Right to refuse: You may choose not to participate or withdraw from participation at any time with no penalty or loss of any benefit to which you might be otherwise entitled
11. Privacy: Results from this study may be published, but no names or individual identifying information will be included in any publications. Participants' identifying information and data will remain confidential unless disclosure is compelled by law.
12. Consent: If you have questions about subjects rights or other concerns please contact Dr. Robert C. Matthews, Institutional Review Board, and (225) 578-8692. Please keep a copy of this cover letter for you records if you choose to participate.

Signature _____ Date _____

Study Exempted By:

Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: 6-12-2014

Vita

Jolanta Smolen Santana found her inspiration to help others thanks to the experiences she accrued over the course of her life and particularly during her time in the Middle East. Having witnessed assorted calamities and how communities rose to reestablish their lives, Jolanta decided that she wanted to contribute to these efforts through innovative educational activities. Working in disaster-stricken areas has always fascinated Jolanta, especially admiring human resiliency and empathetic responses of strangers. Her research agenda continues to surround the topic of emergency education and educational terrorism.

Currently, Jolanta lives in Denver, Colorado with her husband, Rafael, and two cats: Dewey and Bruja. Having recently moved back from Bogota, Colombia, she is now enjoying the new setting and expects to be teaching at university level. In the meantime, Jolanta is ecstatic to join the Dr. Smolen group after following the family motto: “To jest najwspanialszy rok w Twoim życiu!”